A VOYAGE to the ARCTIC in the WHALER AURORA

David Moore Lindsay

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A VOYAGE TO THE ARCTIC IN THE WHALER *AURORA*

The "Aurora" in the Nips off Cape York
From a photo taken at the time

Frontispiece

A VOYAGE TO THE ARCTIC IN THE WHALER *AURORA*

BY

DAVID MOORE LINDSAY, F. R. G. S.

"Our infant winter sinks, divested of its grandeur,
should our eye astonish'd shoot into the frigid zone."

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DEDICATED

TO

Sir Thomas Myles

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A Voyage to the Arctic in the Whaler *Aurora*

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The following is little more than a diary of a voyage made by me on the whaler *Aurora* of Dundee in 1884. I cannot imagine its being read by many, as the subject can only interest a few who have themselves gone down to the sea in ships.

The Arctic whaling industry is I fear becoming a thing of the past, and this prompts me to have the record of our successful voyage printed.

Some mention has been made of the Greely Relief Expedition, as the relief ships were with the whalers during the passage to Cape York from Newfoundland.

We were not brought in contact with the *Chieftain* at all during the cruise, but I have told the story of her disaster, as it was the most unfortunate occurrence of the year amongst the Arctic whalers, and for the data I am very much indebted to the *Dundee Advertiser* and to Mr. Allen Bell and Mr. Harvey of that paper for the trouble they have taken about it. I am also indebted to Mr. Robert Kinnis of Dundee for much interesting

whaling information in the Appendix. As that gentleman possesses the records of all catches taken by British ships for more than a hundred years, he is in a position to supply very valuable data on the subject.

Mr. Walter Kinnis kindly supplied me with many photographs, as did Dr. Crawford, formerly of the *Arctic*, and Captain Murray of Dundee.

It has given me great pleasure recalling the scenes described. As I was very young at the time of the voyage they produced an indelible impression. Often since have I longed for a few weeks in Lancaster Sound, and to hear once more the inspiring shout "A fall!"

Being fond of adventure, and having read as many works on the subject as most boys of my age, it was with great pleasure that I looked forward to hearing a lecture delivered by Commander Cheyne, R. N. I was then at school, and our tutor thought it would be an education for us to hear him. The lecture was to me intensely interesting and the illustrations splendid. For days after I could not think of anything else. During study at night, I used to spend a good deal of time looking at a map of the Arctic seas, and picturing Melville Bay with its dangers. After leaving school, and while at college, I read Walter Scott's "Pirate." It told about the Orkneys and Shetlands, and its frequent allusions to the whaling industry set me thinking. I found myself often repeating:—

"The ship, well laden as barque need be,
Lies deep in the furrow of the Iceland sea.
The breeze for Zetland blows fair and soft
And gaily the garland is fluttering aloft.
Seven good fishes have spouted their last,
And their jawbones are hanging from yard and mast;
Two are for Lerwick, and two for Kirkwall,
And three for Burgh-Westra, the choicest of all."

As there was no immediate chance of going to Greenland, why not see Shetland? So when the summer holidays came, I made my way to Edinburgh with two friends who had also read the "Pirate."

We found that steamers sailed from Leith and that the best of the fleet, the *St. Magnus*, would leave the next morning at six, so we took passage in her and visited Orkney and Shetland, thoroughly enjoying being off the beaten track.

One day we sat on the Nab Head at Lerwick and looked over a calm sea. In the distance a barque could be descried. Half an hour later we noticed her much closer, although no sails hung from her yards. Then we discovered that while barque rigged she could also steam, and when she anchored we found that she was a whaler, the *Eclipse* of the Peter Head,—Captain Gray. We went on board and were shown over the ship. Polar bear skins were stretched in frames drying, and we learned that she had 3,500 seals on board and 17 bottle-nosed whales, and, what was of far more consequence to me, that she carried a surgeon.

Years passed; I was a student at the University

of Edinburgh and had every opportunity of learning about ships sailing from Scottish ports.

One day in November, 1883, I went to Dundee and, leaving the Tay Bridge station, made my way along the docks to a basin in which were several whalers. They were discharging cargo, and it was unnecessary to see them to know of their presence. Two of the ships, though small, were very beautiful to look at. They were the *Jan Mayen* and the *Nova Zembla*. Others, the *Narwhal*, *Polynia*, *Esquimaux*, *Active*, etc., were not so pretty, but they all had a fascination—they came from the romantic Arctic, and I went on board each one. Then I visited another dock where three ships lay together. They were the *Arctic*, the *Aurora* and the *Thetis*. It required no expert to tell that they were vessels of superior quality. I went on board the one nearest the shore, the *Thetis*, and interviewed the mate. He told me that all three ships would carry surgeons. The *Arctic* and *Thetis* were bound for Davis Straits, the *Aurora* for Greenland.

The office of the company, Wm. Steven & Son, was near by, so I left the ship very much excited. Here was almost a chance to visit the Arctic regions. Going over to the office, I learned that the captain of a whaler selected his own surgeon, and that Captain James Fairweather of the *Aurora* had just been there. I obtained his address, and calling a cab, was soon at his house. He was not in, but I waited. Seated in a room on the floor of which polar bear rugs were stretched, I began

Greenland Whaler in Dock at Dundee

to realize that I was taking a rather serious step without consulting my parents. Before long the Captain entered, and after a little conversation, I arranged to sail as the *Aurora's* surgeon the following January. So without really meaning to go when I left my rooms in the morning, I found myself in the railway carriage on the way back to Edinburgh, booked for an unusual voyage.

During the winter I told some friends what I intended to do, and one of them at once went to Dundee and secured the *Arctic*, the captain of which was an Irishman. Another was also desirous of going, but said he would wait until I returned and told him how I liked it. However he too went in the end and we met in the north.

The *Aurora* was bound for the Newfoundland sealing first and afterwards for the Greenland whaling; that is to say, she would fish for bottle-nosed whales on the east side of Greenland in the seas around Jan Mayen and Spitzbergen and make a shorter voyage of it than the Davis Straits ships.

To prepare myself for the experience I read what I could about Greenland, and was fascinated by the prospect of seeing its icy mountains and possibly some of its inhabitants; while the very word Spitzbergen suggested to me polar bears and icebergs. In January, 1884, a letter from the Captain told me he would sail about the end of the month and requested me to be in Dundee by the 29th.

I bought a lot of unnecessary clothing, such as

pilot-cloth suits lined with flannel. When the flannel became wet afterwards it wonderfully altered the fit of the things, so I removed it with my knife. I also laid in a supply of literature, arms and ammunition, and left the Waverley station at six on the morning of the 29th. Arriving at Dundee, I went to a hotel and then to the office, where I met the Captain, and went with him to the place where the men were signing on. Here I heard some one reading rapidly a lot about the nature of the voyage and what we would have to eat. When I left the building, I was a legal member of the *Aurora's* crew for the coming cruise, and my rating was that of surgeon, with pay as follows:

	£.	s.	d.
Monthly pay	2	0	0
Oil money per ton		2	0
Bone per ton		4	0
Seal skins per 1,000		1	0

I had to furnish my own cabin and to pay the market price for any trophy of my own shooting which I wanted to keep. As our voyage was in pursuit of Arctic animals and as I was a member of the crew sent for that purpose, of course this was quite right.

It was possible for me to increase the above pay by being in fast boats. Let me explain what I mean: when a boat first strikes a fish it is called a fast boat; and if the whale is killed, every one in the boat receives what is called striking money. The harpooner gets ten shillings for putting in the gun harpoon, and ten and six pence for the

Captain Jas. Fairweather

Wm. Adam, Mate of the "Aurora"

hand, or a guinea for both, while every member of the crew receives half a crown in either case.

It was my good fortune during the following eight months to increase my wages by two shillings and six pence in this way. Having fixed terms and other details I went on board the ship which was to be my home for some months to come. She was a pretty auxiliary barque of 386 tons registered. Her engines were about a hundred horse power. She had a top-gallant forecastle and a raised poop. Running forward from the poop was the engine room skylight, which ended at the funnel casing, and steps led from the poop to the main deck on each side of it. The funnel was painted buff, the ship outside was black, and the bulwarks inside white and blue. The bridge was across the engine room skylight and in front of the mizzenmast, an iron railing around the poop, offering no protection from the weather, while a companion opened aft in front of our two wheels. The pretty little cabin was furnished in pitch pine and leather. The Captain's room occupied the starboard side, while mine was on the port, both opening into the cabin. Forward of my room was that occupied by the first and second mates, and this looked into the passage at the foot of the stairs. Forward of the passage was the pantry and also the engineer's room. A locker in which things were stowed occupied the stern and opened into the cabin. Forward of the cabin table was a stove in which there was a cheerful fire, and in

the square skylight hung a bird's cage and a garland, also some plants.

Finding out what I wanted for my room, I went into the town, ordered the things and had them sent down.

January 30. Two acquaintances, whose identity I may indicate by the initials H. and P., turned up this day to see me off. I took them over the ship, but they were not very enthusiastic. We afterwards went around the docks and saw the other whalers getting ready for sea. Quantities of marmalade and dozens of hams were being put on board the *Esquimaux*. Two of the whalers had already departed, the *Narwhal* and *Polynia*, while others were not starting for a week to come; but as there were uncertainties about the western ocean's passage in winter, Captain Fairweather had decided not to wait longer than the 31st.

It snowed a little, which made the docks look dreary. I met the Captain's wife on board during the afternoon, also his brother, who had command of the *Thetis*.

The following day Armitage arrived. He brought me a big meerschaum pipe, and was delighted with the ship, so pleased that he visited many others to see if he could not secure a berth on one of them. But those carrying surgeons had their medical officers engaged. We wandered around the docks all the morning and at noon I went on board.

The *Aurora* left the dock at one P. M. and anchored for a short time in the river to pick up a

The Active

few belated and more or less incapable members of the crew, and to land some stowaways.

My friends stood on the dockhead with hundreds of others to see us off, and as we passed through the gate, old shoes, oranges and other things were thrown on board.

I was walking about the poop with my hands deep in the pockets of my pilot coat and looking at the sea of faces on the dock, when, stumbling over a chain, down I came with a crash in the most ignominious way. However a stumble and fall on board a whaler putting to sea generally passes unnoticed; one would attract more attention by standing up all the time! Thus the voyage began, — my position flat on deck, being in keeping with the best traditions of the trade!

CHAPTER II

VOYAGE TO NEWFOUNDLAND

"A thousand miles from land are we,
Tossing about on the roaring sea;
From billow to bounding billow cast
Like fleecy snow on the stormy blast."

Steaming down the river we landed quite a lot of stowaways at Broughty Ferry about 4.30 P. M., just as it was becoming dark. Tea was served at five, — my first meal on board the *Aurora*.

The Captain and myself sat on the starboard side of the table. Wm. Adam, the mate, Alexander McKechnie, second mate, and Wm. Smith, chief engineer, sat on the other side.

Immediately after tea, I went to my room as we were crossing the bar and going out into a gale of wind. Everything was tumbling about, and knowing that in a very short time I should lose all interest in my surroundings, I began making things secure.

There were two berths. My bed was in the upper as it had a porthole, and most of my belongings were stowed in the lower.

A lot of tobacco had become loose, so I put the little packages of it between my bed and the side of the ship. The port was not screwed very tight and leaked badly for a week or so. This saturated

Whaler Leaving Dundee

the tobacco and generated an odor which added nothing to my comfort. The motion becoming very pronounced, I turned in, and being tired, slept well.

February 1st. Footsteps overhead and the singing of shanties on deck awoke me at daybreak, but I was intensely ill, so stayed in bed all day. My room was illuminated by a small light set in the deck overhead and by a partially submerged port, so it was not cheerful. Above my head there was a book shelf. I tried to read, but could not feel interested as it was so very depressing to look forward to months and months of this sort of thing. Matters grew worse as the day went on, the climax being reached when rounding Duncansby Head; but respite came about midnight, when we crept into Long Hope and let go our anchor.

February 2nd. Shouting and crying awoke me in the morning, and opening the door of my cabin, I saw the Captain teaching two boys that the sea was a bad place to run away to. They had been under an upturned boat and the seas coming on board had almost drowned them out. Each boy promised that he would never do it again. They were given two tins of mutton and a small sack of ship's bread, and put on shore.

Long Hope is a well sheltered harbor, between the islands of Hoy and South Walls. There was a pronounced smell of turf smoke about the place and the land was half covered with snow.

Two other whalers were at anchor near by, the *Narwhal* and *Polynia*. They had left Dundee ten

days before us and had been weather bound here for that length of time.

I brought my gun up as there were some Richardson's skuas flying about, but I did not get a shot at one. The mate, however, shot a herring gull with it and this was the first splash of the ocean of blood shed by us during the voyage.

Breakfast was a cheerful meal and the horrors of the North Sea were soon forgotten.

At noon, the tide being favorable and the wind having gone down greatly, we all three steamed out into the Pentland Firth. The *Polynia* was the first to move; I heard her anchor chain clanking on board to a well-sung shanty. We started next, and as there were some good voices forward we tried to outdo the others. The *Narwhal* followed, never to return, as she was lost during the summer.

Turning Brims Ness sharp, we kept on the Orcadian side of the firth; and after passing Turn Ness, we laid our course for Cape Wrath. Across the water we could barely make out Thurso. The land lies rather low about the mouth of the Thurso river; but on the Hoy side the scenery was fine and we soon sighted the Old Man of Hoy. During my trip to Orkney and Shetland a few years before, I had spent several days on this island, so was interested in seeing it now from the sea on this dismal February afternoon. Its sombre cliffs are always grand, but the present atmospheric condition made the scene impressive.

The Old Man of Hoy, in the simple language of

Leaving the Tay

The Old Man of Hoy — Orkney

the guide book, is, " An insular pillar composed of flagstones and shales. Across their denuded edges there stretches the band of amygdaloidal lava which is capped by the red sandstones to the height of four hundred fifty feet." I could make out the Ward Hill, but clouds lay low on its summit. Near there I had visited the celebrated Dwarfie Stone made famous by Scott in his " Pirate." It is a huge block of rock twenty-two feet by seventeen and seven deep. There is a passage in it with a bed like a ship's berth hewn out on each side, and it had been, of course, the home of a Trold.

I turned my back on this land of Trolds, and went down the quarter-hatch to see the second mate serving out lime-juice, tea, coffee, tobacco and sugar to the men. I heard their names called and had a good look at them as they came up. Our crew was a fine looking lot and the most respectable body of men one could find on any ship, unlike the New Bedford or San Francisco South Sea whalers, which carried very mixed crews of every color.

Most of our men had spent the greater part of their lives in Greenland waters, and though not well informed on current topics and very superstitious, they were self-respecting to a degree and absolutely fearless, and they were all of the same nationality.

Of course, life on board a whaler is much pleasanter than on any other sort of merchantman, because the ships are well found and the crews

very large so that, except when actually engaged in sealing or whaling, they have an easy enough time.

The captains in the trade were very humane men, many of them scientific, and they treated their crews well. Amongst the harpooners were often found men who had themselves commanded ships and whose stars, no doubt, would again be in the ascendancy.

A few unsuccessful years, or the loss of a ship or two, would probably cost a man his command, and bad luck cannot be avoided.

Before the second mate had finished serving out I retired, as the ship was beginning to feel the heavy swell that was coming in, and by six P. M. I was absolutely "under the weather," and it was blowing hard from the northwest. We passed Cape Wrath about midnight. The following day a strong gale was blowing with snow and the engines were slowed down.

February 4th. Blowing a gale, reefed mizzen set and main topmast staysail, with the engines slowed down. During the morning a man was hurt. He was carried aft and held on the cabin table while I — very ill — and also held, sewed his scalp and dressed the wound.

February 5th. Strong gale. Ship under reefed mizzen and main staysail, steaming slow. High sea running and sun obscured all day.

This applies to the state of affairs on the 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th, during all of which time I enjoyed the horrors of *mal de mer*. I saw by the log

that we had spent our days under fore and afters with a heavy sea running, but I made no original observations, keeping in my berth all the time, wondering during my conscious moments what brought me to sea and vowing that I would never set foot on a vessel again if spared this time.

The ship's dog (Jock) was a rather sociable and sympathetic collie. He spent a good deal of time with me, and I could not help admiring the old chap when I knew that he really did not belong to any one, but always turned up on the *Aurora* about sailing time and made the voyage with her. At St. John's, Jock had lots of friends and visited a good deal, but he was always on board on sailing day.

February 11th. A mere shadow of my former self, I got up and did not feel ill. My wash basin was in one corner of the room. I put my head against the corner above it and by sticking one foot against the side of the door and another against the lower berth, was able to apply a little water to my face, but the swing of the ship was so great that it swished nearly every drop out of the basin. I dressed and went to breakfast, feeling absolutely well and ravenously hungry. After breakfast, tucking my breeches inside my sea boots, I went on deck. The door opened aft. As I came out, the stern of the vessel sank low as the bows rose on the sea, and I saw a black mountain of water rolling from us. Getting to the mizzen rigging on the port side, I put my arms in the shrouds and stood on a spar lashed on deck. It

was very dark for the hour and blowing the greatest storm that I had ever experienced, the wind fairly shrieking through the rigging.

We were steaming half speed and had a reefed mizzen and main staysail set. Looking forward, I saw the little ship taking tons of dark water over her bows. It came off the forecastle in a cataract, and rushing aft between the engine room and bulwarks, it surged upon the poop. We only had a few feet of free board and were making terrible weather of it. The atmosphere was full of water, as the tops of the waves were blown off in sheets. A great splash came over the quarter about this time and fairly engulfed me. Then I learned that it was better to wear one's sea boots inside instead of outside the trousers.

This was sufficient for the day, so I retired below to change and dry. During the evening, the Captain showed me our position on a chart which was glued to the cabin table under the cloth. We were not yet half way across.

The 12th, 13th and 14th were all equally awful, but I had my sea legs and a good appetite, so was thankful. The only pleasure I had was standing on the bridge and watching the ship burying her bows into the big seas and the water coming in tons over the forecastle and filling the main deck. She was indeed a wet ship in bad weather.

February 15th. The Captain said that he had never seen a lower barometer. A great gale was blowing and the ship was hove to. Bags of oil had been put out on the weather side, but the oil

did not escape with sufficient freedom so they were hauled in and a lot of punctures made with a knife, but this did not improve matters much. It rendered the sea comparatively smooth to leeward and there was not so much spray flying, but tons of water tumbled over us and we spent a dreadful day. I tried the deck for awhile, but it was dangerous. At night the ship was laboring fearfully and continued to do so for days.

February 20th. Another fearful day. I had occasion to visit the topgallant forecastle to see the ship-keeper, who had hurt his knee. There was a line from the forecastle door to the main rigging for safety, as one was almost sure to be caught by a sea while going the length of the deck.

Two men came aft for me, and watching our chance, we reached the forecastle safe. Coming back, I decided to try it alone, so waited until a tremendous sea had broken over us, then before she had time to take another, I made a dash, but a body of water splashed over the starboard side and forced me to climb up the inside of the main rigging and stay there until some of it swept off the deck. Towards night the wind began to moderate a little.

February 21st. Pitching and tossing as usual. Cloudy, but not much wind; a nasty sea, however, and the canvas did not hold her steady. Really in a heavy gale the storm holds a ship down to some extent.

The next day, however, the weather had mod-

erated, so I tried stoking and managed quite well. I also tried changing a fire, which was not such a success, but I kept steam up and it was an interesting experience.

An end comes to all things. On the morning of the 23rd the ship for the first time was on an even keel and some sun was shining through my deck light. Hitherto attempts at washing had been unsatisfactory, as the motion of the ship in a sea was so quick. Now, however, I indulged in a complete toilet, and with a feeling of self-respect went on deck. The day was cloudless and beautiful, the sea smooth as glass, and dotted over it were white specks of ice. In a very short time the pieces of ice became more numerous and larger, and when we were at breakfast we heard and felt the ship crushing and bumping amongst them. By eleven A. M. a breeze came up from the south-east and all sail was set, but by noon the ship stuck hard and fast in the ice, and presented to me a wonderful and beautiful sight.

Every stitch of canvas was set and drawing, and the engine going full speed, but still for a time we did not move. Now was my chance to walk about on the frozen sea, so I went out with the dog and we both enjoyed a race, keeping very close, however, for at any moment the *Aurora* might move. We came on board when the mate called, as a crack was appearing ahead of the ship. We were now two hundred twenty miles from St. John's, and expected to be in ice all the way. During the afternoon I went up to the foretop and

Valentine

Breaking through Soft Ice

thoroughly enjoyed a half hour gazing at the wonderful scene.

We were very seldom stuck for any length of time, a few bumps from the ship being generally sufficient to open a crack.

A great many of the men were on deck most of the day, and certainly she was a heavily manned ship with her crew of sixty-five. Six of them belonged to the engine room, eight were harpooners, who lived in the topgallant forecastle, as did some of our tradesmen. Of these we had two carpenters, a cooper, blacksmith, and sailmaker. The speck-sioneer also lived there. He was the chief of the harpooners, a splendid old man called George Lyon. Sixteen of our men were from Shetland, a quiet, sober, industrious lot.

Standing on the forecastle, I watched the ship crunching through several miles of young ice. She never actually stopped once. Her bows would rise up on it, then huge slabs would tilt on end as she glided on. Sometimes a long crack would open and let her slide in to be almost stuck. By degrees she would gain way and probably steam into an open pool, to strike the opposite side with considerable force, thereby opening a crack in which she would repeat the performance. The engine is the secret of ice navigation. With canvas alone we would have been fast in the ice much of the time, while with heavier engines we could have gone through heavier ice. The night was fine, and we managed to keep moving on our course.

February 24th was a glorious day. One would

scarcely expect to find such weather in February in this neighborhood.

In the morning we passed through rather smooth ice. Occasionally there were large ponds and in many of these I saw seals. Sometimes they were plunging about in numbers, but generally a few heads only were visible looking at us inquisitively as we passed. There were no bergs in sight, but during the afternoon we passed some rafted ice which was piled up six or seven feet above the floes, and once we were fast for an hour in a rather heavy place, when I again tried the walking, but there was snow on the ice which was slightly frozen on the surface, and this made it heavy as one went through the crust. Towards evening the sky became cloudy; it was very cold, and snow was falling when I turned in for the night.

In the morning Cape Bonavista was in sight. It was my first view of this New World. All land was beautiful to me after a month at sea and this looked so attractive as we neared it that I wanted to settle on it for the rest of my life. However, we passed on, and during the day steamed through the narrows and tied up astern of the *Arctic* on the south side of St. John's harbor at what was known as Stevens Wharf.

The *Arctic* had sailed ten days after us and had made good weather of it as she was a long ship of nearly double our tonnage, but of nothing like our strength of build.

The *Esquimaux*, *Polynia*, *Narwhal* and *Reso-*

The Resolute's Wooden Funnel

lute had also arrived. The latter on the way out had lost her funnel, so a pyramidal structure had been erected of wood lined with tin; this answered very well for a time. Some of her bulwarks had been carried away, especially forward of the main rigging on the port side. She was a fine ship, strong and well engined, but the North Atlantic in winter leaves its mark on the best.

The *Resolute* was owned in St. John's and commanded by a St. John's captain; but she came out from Dundee, where she had been overhauled.

So ended my first trip across the Atlantic, and, until then, the most uncomfortable experience of my life.

CHAPTER III

NEWFOUNDLAND

"Such are the charms to barren states assyn'd,
Their wants but few, their wishes all confin'd."

Our first possession across the sea was Newfoundland, and I made the voyage to it 400 years after John Cabot, the discoverer. The *Mathew* of Bristol first sighted Cape Bonavista, which was the first point seen by the *Aurora*. Cabot was a Venetian sailing out of Bristol for a time, and for his great discovery, which gave England her vast American possessions, King Henry gave John ten pounds a year. Cabot is to-day very well thought of, but nothing much is known of what became of him. The name makes an attractive one for a Newfoundland dog. I have known several of them bear it, and it is a sort of geographical education to have them running around; but there is not any place of importance in the world called after this great mariner.

The coast of the country is forbidding, being rocky and bleak, except around some of the bays; the most beautiful of those seen by me being Bay of Islands on the west coast, which reminds one of Norway. Here and in the valley of the Humber, which runs into it, there is some very fertile

land, and there are some scenes of peace and prosperity. But the general impression I have obtained after several visits to the country, is that life is a struggle for many of the inhabitants compared with what it is in any other colony which we possess. Newfoundlanders are true to the land of their birth, but one familiar with North America at large would never think of advising a colonist to push his fortune in this particular part of it, because the opportunities are comparatively few and the winters are too long for any working man to remain idle. In the interior the soil is as a rule shallow; there are thousands and thousands of acres of barrens, hundreds of lakes of different sizes and numbers of streams. Great areas of the country are grown over with small timber, the trees being so close together in places that one can hardly push through them. Much of the barren country is moss-grown and boggy, so that it cannot be travelled over by horses or mules; therefore, when one leaves the rivers, it is necessary to carry everything on one's back, and, as a result, travel in the interior is not much indulged in by the inhabitants. To add to the pleasure, mosquitoes and their cousins, the black flies, are in swarms. The whole interior is a deer forest of the first magnitude, teeming with caribou (Rangifer tarandus). These animals weigh about 300 pounds, and they are very gray about the head and shoulders. I have seen them standing among trees which were grown over with bearded moss, when it was difficult to tell the caribou from the

trees. Some of the heads are splendid with a great deal of palmation and not at all like Greenland or polar American caribou in which the palmation is generally poor and the beam long and straggling, probably due to a difference of environment. Migrating to the northern part of the island in summer, they return in September and October to winter in the south, and the sportsman intercepting them on their autumnal trip can have his choice of heads.

Another attraction is the salmon and trout fishing. The rivers, especially on the west coast, are well stocked, white trout being particularly numerous.

St. John's harbor is entered through the narrows. On the left, going in, there is the lighthouse; and on the right, or north side, the signal station. On this side is the city, lying at the foot of low hills, its principal street, Water Street, being parallel with the shore. From it run side streets down to the wharves and up the hill to the residences and churches. The Dundee ships lay on the south side, our yard being nearest the narrows. From it a path led out to the lighthouse point. A hundred yards from the ship one was on the hillside and without the pale of everything, because only a narrow fringe of buildings separated the south shore from the wilds. Along the water edge, between our ship and the lighthouse, one passed lots of fish flakes. These were constructed of a framework of vertical and horizontal poles covered over with spruce boughs upon

Holloway, St. Johns, Nfld.

The Narrows, St. Johns

which the split codfish were laid after being salted. The air circulated under and around them well and they soon dried. I saw codfish being dried on the beach in Shetland, but they were only spread on the shingle. There are no trees in Shetland from which poles could be made, but there is less precipitation there than in Newfoundland, so the fish dry well upon the shingle. It is over 300 years since the Newfoundland fisheries began to be worked. They proved the country's first attraction and there is nothing of the sort in the world like them. For the five years 1871 to '75 the export of dried cod was 1,333,009 quintals of 112 pounds. The Basques first appeared on the scene and a port on the west coast to-day bears their name, Port aux Basques. As early as 1527 an English shipmaster, on entering St. John's harbor, found eleven ships from Norway, one from Breton and ten from Portugal, all fishing.

In looking over the exports for 1881 one notices several interesting items; one is, 4,127 tons of cod-liver oil, another item is 300 barrels of cods' heads at $1.00 per barrel. I fancy, however, their use has not become very general yet when we know that only 300 barrels were exported, and that over sixty million cod were killed. When I speak of the cod fishing, I mean the Labrador as well as the Banks fishery. In fact, the former is probably the more fished of the two by the Newfoundlanders.

The day after our arrival our ship began dis-

charging cargo, that is to say, taking off our whale-boats and launch, and taking out all supplies for the whaling voyage. Then they began sheathing the deck and bulwarks — even the floor of the cabin was covered with plank. Bunks were erected for the men in the 'tween decks, all stores removed from the quarter hatch and bunks put in there for the quartermasters, and the crow's-nest was hoisted up and made fast to the main mast, a few feet below the truck. The crow's-nest or barrel was a most comfortable place. One entered through a trap door in the bottom, and when this was closed there was no draught. Around the edge of the barrel and sticking out some distance there was an iron rail upon which the glass could rest, the latter being kept in a canvas bag or pocket inside. From there the ship was navigated, a wire going to the engine room and ringing the bell, but orders to the man at the wheel were called down. While these changes were taking place, in company with the surgeon of the *Arctic*, I wandered all over St. John's and the neighborhood, and enjoyed the hospitality of many residents. It was some distance around the end of the harbor to the city, but we could skate across if we liked. The weather was intensely cold and the land was covered with deep snow.

The *Aurora* having been converted into a sealer, and having taken on board her supplies and exchanged her beautiful whale-boats for a number of very crude looking punts, moved over

Holloway, St. Johns, Nfld.

St. John's Harbour in Spring

to the north side of the harbor, and waited for sailing day to take her crew on board.

It may not be out of place to make a few remarks here about seals and sealing generally. Most people know that seal fisheries exist, but few have any idea of their extent. The ice-fields of Newfoundland and Labrador produce more than anywhere else; but Greenland, Northern Europe, the seas around Jan Mayen, Nova Zembla and Spitzbergen produce also a great harvest, and the fur-bearing seals of the Aleutian Islands must not be forgotten. Sealing on the east coast of Greenland is entirely in the hands of natives, but the industry in other places is chiefly prosecuted by Europeans and Americans. Lindeman tells us that in 1720 the ports of the Weser sent out ships, that in 1760 Hamburg sent nineteen which took 44,722 seals, that in 1862 five German ships took 17,000, five Danish 5,000, fifteen Norwegian 63,000 and twenty-two British 51,000; so this gives one an idea of the extent to which Great Britain was represented. In 1876 the Dundee ships alone took 53,000, valued at over £34,000. It was the custom for the British sealers to arrive in Bressa Sound, Shetland, about the end of February, and there pick up a considerable part of their crews, getting to the ice about the middle of March. The young seals were in good condition about this time and had not yet taken to the water, so afforded an easy prey to their foes. Around Newfoundland, sealing has gone on with great profit to all engaged for probably one hun-

dred and fifty years, and a glance at the following table will give some idea of its extent:

In	1805	81,088 were taken
	1818	145,072
	1822	306,982
	1831	686,836
	1840	631,385
	1850	598,860
	1860	444,202
	1872	278,372
	1881	447,903

Roughly, about 350,000 every year, the greatest catch being 685,530 in 1844.

Harvey tells us that in 1857 there were nearly four hundred vessels of 80 to 200 tons burthen engaged in the industry, employing altogether 13,600 men, and that the year's catch was worth $1,700,000. Now, about eight to ten thousand men are engaged, and the seal fishing yields about one-eighth part of the entire exports of the country.

Steam was first used in 1863 and then the sailing ships began to decrease in number. In 1884 more than thirty steamers were used, while the sailing ships had become scarce.

With the advent of steam, the Dundee owners began casting covetous eyes at Newfoundland. The western ocean passage could be made early in the year, and the sealing taken in en route to the whaling. It became necessary to arrange with agents at St. John's, or to build yards where the cargo of seals could be taken care of, leaving

The "Aurora"

The "Arctic"

the vessel free to proceed north. At this time six ships represented Dundee.

Arctic, Captain Guy
Narwhal, Captain Phillips
Aurora, Captain Jas. Fairweather
Polynia, Captain Walker
Esquimaux, Captain Milne
Thetis, Captain Alex. Fairweather

The *Resolute*, Captain Jackman, could hardly be called a Dundee ship, and it so happened that the *Thetis* went on other business this year; but the above were the usual six.

The seals forming our cargo from the Newfoundland ice were harps (Phoca Greenlandica), so called on account of a peculiar mark on each side of the adult, extending from near the shoulder to near the tail, and hoods (Cystophora Cristata), so called on account of a large inflatable sac on the nose of the male. On our trip to Labrador we secured quite a number of hoods, but on our first trip our cargo was practically one of harps. Both these species are migratory, coming south in winter and working north in summer as the ice recedes. As the banks of Newfoundland swarm with fish, they form a pleasant winter resort for the seals, and are very convenient to the floes on which they spend February and March. Harbor seals (Phoca vetulini) and square flippers (Phoca barbatus) are also found on the coast.

The breeding ice of the seal is the goal of every master in the trade, but there are no rules for

finding it. One may consider the influence of currents and winds, and may navigate accordingly only to find the seals are not found where expected. In our own case, the Captain told me the day we left St. John's that he had no definite idea of where to go. Nevertheless we awoke one morning to find ourselves surrounded by hundreds of thousands.

Young seals are born on the Newfoundland ice February 15th to 25th, and are in perfect condition for the market by March 20th, as they have been well fed by their mothers until then. They are a yellowish white when born and remain so until they begin to take to the water, when the longish white hair is rapidly shed and the young one quickly loses its condition.

Owing to the exciting nature of the work, a trip to the ice is the desire of nearly every Newfoundland boy. The great danger is fog coming down while the men are sealing far from the ship, and next comes the danger of losing the ship and drifting about on the floes until possibly death takes place from cold and starvation.

In 1872 one hundred men perished, fifty going down with the *Huntsman* on the coast of Labrador. The *Bloodhound* and *Retriever* were lost the same year, their crews escaping to Battle Harbor after terrible hardships.

Scoresby tells us of the classical disaster which occurred in 1774 about sixty miles east of Jan Mayen. The sealing fleet, consisting of over fifty vessels, met at the ice edge on March the 29th.

Holloway, St. Johns, Nfld.

Home Sweet Home

Holloway, St. Johns, Nfld.

Hood Seals

The whole fleet entered the ice streams and their boats went off sealing. A storm suddenly arose, destroying five of the ships and injuring many more, while most of the sealers who were far from their ships were never seen again, almost six hundred men being lost. One could not talk to a sealer long without learning of some horrible accident which had occurred to himself or a friend, and while some of them were given to romance, there could be no question about the perils they encountered or about their bravery and endurance.

Toward the end of February, the sweilers, as they are called, began to arrive in St. John's looking for berths. As the steamers afforded better opportunities, the able men got them, while the older ones took to the sailing craft, where life was not so strenuous. These men were dressed very much alike and were most athletic; some of them were perfectly wonderful in the way they jumped from pan to pan, barely touching some of the smaller ones in passage. The owners did not overfeed the men on these trips, providing them with sea biscuits and pinnacle tea chiefly, pork and duff being served only three days a week and salt fish on Fridays. The water from which the tea was brewed was obtained by thawing pinnacles of ice. When ice floes came together they rafted one on to the other and shattered fragments stuck up in all directions. Snow piled upon these and was frozen. When water was wanted, a body of men with axes went on the ice and broke

off the pinnacles, which were taken on board and stacked on deck. As water was required these were put into a tank and steam turned on. Tea was made with this water, and molasses added in place of cream and sugar. Our water for the cabin use was not obtained from this source.

On steamers the crew received one-third of the catch, on sailing ships one-half. This was made to the Newfoundland men only on the Dundee ships, the Dundee crew getting paid so much a month, as well as a fraction of the catch. When a ship was amongst the white coats, as the young seals were called, the crew lived well, as they ate the livers, hearts and flippers of the seals. The men carried a supply of livers and hearts in their belts and ate them frozen or cooked as opportunity afforded. It is easy to see how little cooking can be done for a crew of three hundred men on a small ship. I have often seen a man tie a cord to a liver and drop it into a pot of tea sitting on the galley stove, drawing it out when warmed up or when the owner of the pot came for his tea.

Sailing ships were allowed to leave port on March 1st, but steamers could not clear for the sealing until March 10th, and the laws were very strictly enforced. It was not unusual for a ship to have her pans of seals pilfered by another ship during a fog, and this often led to legal complications. I have frequently seen our men cut private marks on the fatty sides of the sculps so that they might be identified afterwards. Of course, any ship would pick up a pan which had lost its

flag. Sometimes the sweilers had great luck, being gone only a week or two and coming back with their pockets full. A sculp was worth $2.00 to $3.00, and as the men received one-third of all taken, it amounted to a good deal for them, and as it came off at a season when there was nothing else being done, it added greatly to its value.

Ships engaging in this work had to have their hold bulkheaded off so that, should they encounter bad weather, the cargo would not shift. As the *Aurora* was tanked, that was all that was necessary. If the ship were long in reaching port after taking her seals on board, the fat might break down and the oil flood everything, unless the ship had tanks. In our case the sculps were on board such a short time that they were as fresh looking when landed as when taken. The fat was separated from the skin on shore by a man with a long knife. He drew a sculp over a board and caught the edge of it with his left hand; using the knife with his right, in a few sweeps he removed all the blubber. This was thrown into a sausage machine and afterwards steamed in tanks to extract the oil, which was refined by exposure to the sun's rays. The oil was used for machinery and in lighthouses, and the skins were made into harness, boots, etc., farmers using the refuse for fertilizing purposes.

When one saw this small army of fine looking, hard working and very poor men, he could not help being sorry that their forefathers in emigrating had not gone a little further and settled

in Canada or the United States, instead of on this inhospitable land. Think of how comparatively easy their lives would have been, and what a return they would have reaped for their work. Newfoundland meant to every one of them a life of toil with not much more hope than the mother country could have given them. Poor soil and a relentless winter mean this as a rule in a country the mineral resources of which have not been developed.

CHAPTER IV

NEWFOUNDLAND SEALING

"The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around;
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound."

March 10th. At five A. M. all was life on board the *Aurora.* On awaking, I had coffee, which was in the cabin, and, muffling up well, I went on deck, as it was bitterly cold. The night was cloudy and dark but the ship was illuminated with torches, and on each side of the gangway stood the mate and ice-master, calling the roll. The Newfoundland men came on board as their names were called, about three hundred in all, including the quartermasters, who lived down in the quarter-hatch. The men all wore boots made of untanned seal skin, from which the hair had been removed. They were very light and serviceable and came up to the knee. Spikes were driven into the soles to prevent slipping on the ice, and the decks were preserved from these by rough plank sheathing. There was great wrangling and disputing, as many of the men had been celebrating the occasion.

At six A. M. we cast loose and by degrees

broke our way from the wharf. The scene, when the sun arose, was intensely interesting; all the sealing ships were out, trying to crush their way towards the narrows, and, as the harbor was entirely frozen over, this was hard work. Two ships, the *Resolute* and the *Polynia*, were behind us, and these last sent two or three hundred to assist our Newfoundland crew in pulling on a hawser over our bows, while our Scotch crew on board ran backwards and forwards across the deck to make the ship roll. This rolling often helped greatly when the ship put her bows in a crack. Our method was to go full speed astern for a few yards, and then full speed ahead, the eight or nine hundred men on the ice pulling for all they were worth at the same time, and the *Aurora's* men on board running across the deck to keep up the roll. As there were thousands of men similarly employed on and about the other ships, and as they were all singing, the scene may be imagined.

The *Nimrod* and *Neptune* were moving on, well ahead of us, and when we got into their wake, the *Aurora* moved along faster. It was eight bells by the time we passed through the narrows; there the ice was much looser, so we all pushed off in our various directions to look for the breeding haunts of seals. Captain Fairweather kept a little nearer shore than the others, and by evening there were only a few ships in sight.

I retired early, as I had been up for many hours, and even the bumping and thumping of the ship,

Holloway, St. Johns, Nfld.

Freeing the Ship

Holloway, St. Johns, Nfld.

The Neptune

as she went full speed ahead and full speed astern every few minutes all night, did not keep me awake.

March 11th. When I went on deck, a wonderful Arctic scene presented itself. A snow storm was raging and the ship looked as though she had been fast there for years. She was literally buried in snow, and the weather was so cold that the snow had frozen on her yards and rigging. The morning was dark and one could not see very far. Under the starboard bow the ice was heavy, causing the ship to lie over to port. The wind was from the southeast and had driven the ice in on us. There was a great deal of creaking and crunching from moving floes and the wind made a lot of noise in the rigging. By noon the weather had moderated and the snow ceased; by night the wind was coming from the northeast and the ice slackened, the ship being upon an even keel. Of course, snow was not allowed to remain very long on deck, as our big crew had nothing to do but shovel it off.

I looked into the 'tween-decks and saw a horrible mess. The bunks were full of men, many playing cards, as each bunk held four. They must have been stifled. For light, lamps burning seal oil were used, and the reek coming from the main hatch would almost have suggested fire.

During the night, the ship got under way, and her bumping awoke me several times.

March 12th. In the morning, we were again beset. Hearing a noise on deck, I went up. On

the poop a lot of duffs were lying about like 64 lb. shot. A crowd of angry men could be seen on the main deck and facing them was the Captain. A big Newfoundland man came up the steps and, breaking a duff in two, held it up and asked the Captain to look at it. It was an awkward moment and called for immediate action. But the Captain was a man of action, so he planted a blow between the man's eyes and asked him to look at that; the man dropped back dazed and the trouble came to an end at once.

The Captain told a story at breakfast about a steward once saying that more tea would not be required for the next voyage as he had been boiling the leaves from the cabin and giving it to the crew. An order was at once issued to serve out good tea of the proper strength instead. Next morning all hands came aft to complain about the black stuff the cook was serving out, and demanding that proper tea, such as they had been having, should be served.

The weather was now fine, and the world very white, the only visible black being a pond of open water half a mile to the east of us. The wind was again from the east and the cold intense; in fact, one could hardly face it on account of small particles of ice driven by it.

After breakfast I took my rifle and went to the lee side of the open water. It was perhaps a fourth of a mile long and a hundred and fifty yards wide. Every little while a few seals would bob up at one end of the hole and then, giving

Holloway, St. Johns, Nfld.

Bound for the Sealing

a few plunges, disappear. I crouched behind a pinnacle for shelter and, watching past the side of it, soon had a shot. I fancied I heard the bullet strike, but the seal disappeared; presently another came. This time I was sure that I saw the water around bloodstained, but there was a ripple and it was difficult to see anything lying low on it. I spent several hours at this work and was perfectly certain I had hit many seals. On one occasion, I saw the side of one I had shot, with the water breaking over it, but presently it disappeared. I knew that at this season the animals would float, and as I was on the lee side, why did they not drift down to me? Cold at last drove me back to the *Aurora*, and, on relating my experiences, the ice-master told me that I would find the dead animals at the weather side of the hole, as the ice, drifting before the wind, would travel faster than the dead and almost completely submerged seals. So taking a man with me, I had the satisfaction of seeing seven big male harps pulled out, the first I had ever killed and the first secured by the ship.

During the afternoon the ice eased off and the ship again proceeded. She was getting along pretty well at bedtime, but not making any particular course.

March 13th. It was about five A. M. when the steward came to my room and lit the lamp. He said we were among the "white coats" and he seemed greatly pleased. I dressed and, going up, found bright moonlight. The ship was hard and

fast. In every direction I could hear sounds like the crying of children. I could also see gangs of men on the ice and some coming on board. The men had been taking advantage of the moonlight to begin their work, and all were in splendid spirits, as a full ship meant much to them.

About six the whistle sounded for all hands to come on board for breakfast, and after that they were organized into companies, commanded by their own quartermasters, and proceeded about the slaughter in a well regulated manner. Each man carried a spruce pole, on the end of which was a sort of boat hook called a " gaff," and each also had a tow rope. The method of proceeding was as follows:

A company would go in a certain direction and then scatter. A man would kill four or five whitecoats by hitting them on the head with his gaff. He would pull them together and sculp them, that is, with his sculping knife he would make an incision on the under surface of the body, its entire length, through the skin and fat. Now the skin, with its subcutaneous fat, was very loosely adherent to the rest of the body of the young seal, so with a very few sweeps of the knife the body was separated and thrown away. He then made a few holes along each side of the sculp, which was oblong, and through these laced his tow rope. When the four or five had been thus arranged, he towed them to a selected pan, where they were piled with the others, and when the seals in the immediate neighborhood had been

Holloway, St. Johns, Nfld.

Establishing a Pan

Holloway, St. Johns, Nfld.

A Pan of Sculps

killed and piled there, a pole was stuck up, bearing a flag on which was the name of the ship, and this being done, the sealers moved on and established another pan.

While the St. John's men were busy with the sealing, the Scotch crew remained on the ship, throwing the coal overboard. The ship, leaving Newfoundland, took a lot of coal, as she did not know where she might have to go or how long she might be away. In our case, we found the seals at once, so the coal, being of no further use and of no value, compared with the seals, was thrown overboard.

I went aloft to have a look at our surroundings. We were in Bonavista Bay, and in the distance I saw the *Neptune* sealing. She was a large ship and took an enormous cargo. It seemed too bad that these should be the only two vessels in the midst of this harvest. I saw, with the glass, seals by the thousand; they were principally to the north of us, and it was evident that we would fill the ship, unless a gale broke up the ice too soon. Astern, I noticed a patch of ice on which there were lots of old harps. Getting my rifle and going over to the place, I found a great many seal holes in the ice. I watched. A seal would stick its head out of one and, seeing me, would instantly go down again. This was going on all over the area before me. Sitting down, I decided to take the first head presenting itself. By watching any given hole, one would probably very soon have a shot, but it was more exciting to take the heads

as they came up. It was very quick shooting and good sport. Every time I hit a seal, I killed it, because only the head could be seen. At this season, the animals, being in prime condition, floated; but getting one out of its hole was very difficult. If one turned it around and seized the hind flippers, the fore flippers caught the ice, and there was nothing to take hold of about its head. I found, that by sticking an empty cartridge through the nose and catching this at each side, a man could manage to pull the seal out by throwing himself back. I amused myself at this game until eight bells, when I went on board for dinner and found the Captain in splendid spirits. There was every chance of his filling his ship and being first in, and I questioned whether these honors had ever been obtained by any Scotch master at the Newfoundland sealing before. After dinner, I took a man with me who pulled out the seals and sculped them, hauling them to the ship, which remained fast. The crew got on well with the coal and soon had several tanks cleaned out and ready for the nearest pan, and by night we had about 2,500 on board. I went aloft again and saw our pan flags flying in great numbers, while the men were very busy several miles away. After dark, the sealers came on board and reported having killed probably 10,000. Many of the men had given themselves bad cuts with their sharp sculping knives, but all were very happy, forward and aft.

March 14th. Every one up at dawn. The ship was alongside a pan when I came on deck, and the

Harp Seals

Holloway, St. Johns, Nfld.

Sculping

winch was going all the time, while the orders "Heave away port," "Heave away starboard," were being constantly given, and every few minutes a bunch of sculps would be hauled on board and thrown below by the men on deck. When this pan was cleaned up, the officer in the barrel directed the ship's course to the next, and so it went, all day long, a portion of the crew working coal as usual. I went aloft and saw our men, five or six miles away, piling up our cargo. In the afternoon, I went off in the direction the men were and fortunately I had a gaff with me. I had on very thick clothes and a pilot jacket over all. When about a mile from the ship, and while walking over a nice, smooth piece of ice, I noticed that it was bending under me. I turned and was getting back to the hummocks, when I went through. Fortunately, the gaff caught on both sides and I only went in up to my arms, so was able to climb out. The cold of the water was intense and I had a fright. Before reaching the ship, my clothes were frozen hard. One great comfort about the *Aurora* was that she was a steamer, so when any accidents of this kind occurred, it was a great thing, having the top of the boiler to retire to. Here one had warmth at any rate. As there was nothing much separating the top of our boiler from the stoke hole, there was a deposit of ashes and soot, but a little thing like that did not much trouble a man fished out of a frozen sea.

It was cold and dark when the sealers began coming on board and a fog was settling down, so

about nine P. M. we were quite uneasy over some who had not turned up. The whistle sounded frequently, and it was a relief when the last appeared. Some were really very much exhausted and were given rum.

We took on board about five thousand seals and the men had killed many thousand more.

March 15th. A snow storm blowing, so the men could not go to the sealing, and very little new work was accomplished. However, the ship managed to reach a lot of her pans, and the Newfoundland men hauled the sculps from others farther away, so that by night, four thousand more were on board. Coal was worked energetically all day.

The barometer was rising at night and the snow had ceased, so the weather looked more settled.

March 16th. Sealers away when I came on deck, and our own crew very busy with the seals and coal. The ice showed a lot of leads and there were seals in the open ponds, so I spent my time at them with the rifle and had some good shooting.

At dinner the mate told us we had taken on board over three thousand sculps and by night two thousand more were added to these. About sixteen thousand five hundred were now on board.

I spent some time aloft. The glare from the ice was fearfully trying as the sun was very bright. Owing to the open character of the ice, we followed the sealers quite well. We found several of our pans broken by the weight of seals on them; in every case we saw sharks in the open water

beside the broken pan. Once the ship had her engines going ahead to keep her bows against the ice, while she took seals on board (I was looking over the rail aft), when I saw a shark gliding up to the propeller. It hit him on the side and cut a flap out about two feet long. He swam about with this mass hanging from him for awhile and then went back to the propeller, which finished him with an awful gash across the neck. This was the only one I saw killed.

The night was clear and the men had no difficulty in getting on board.

March 17th. It was blowing and the ice was rather tight; there was also some snow, so the sealers were employed bringing sculps on board, as pans were being broken. I saw one split in two. Half the sculps had been lost in the water, and there were numbers of sharks around. A man stuck his gaff into one several times, and it did not appear to mind. It was difficult getting the seals on board as the heavy snow squalls prevented our seeing the leads. However, twenty-five hundred more were secured from broken pans in our immediate neighborhood. The ship was drifting south all the time; and the *Neptune* was still in sight when it cleared in the afternoon.

March 18th. All hands up early and a good start made. Nearly all the coal over the side. I watched the men bringing on board pinnacles in the morning. As they had been sealing steadily for a week and had not paid much attention to their toilets, sleeping in their clothes, etc., and as

each one had a fringe of frozen livers sticking in his belt, and the sheathed decks were soaking in oil, the pinnacles had a chance of acquiring a nutritious quality which must have given body to the tea manufactured out of them. However, the men did not mind, and as our cabin supply of water was all right, I did not mind either.

The ship picked up a lot of pans and added five thousand more to our collection. Towards evening it became foggy and cold, and we had several frights about men being lost. One fellow came on board and stated that he had seen so and so two miles from the ship, unable to proceed. Some rum was given to him and with a couple of others he started off to bring the exhausted one in. All were on board safely by nine P. M. There was no doubt but that often the rum served out found its way into throats that were far from being too weak to swallow, but such dreadful accidents have occurred that one acts on the safe side. There was no abuse of liquor on board the *Aurora*, but the Captain did not hesitate to supply it when absolutely necessary.

March 19th. A nice day for sealing, as there was no difficulty getting about to the pans. We brought on board about two thousand, and the ship was practically full. Now we began to clear out the 'tween-decks and to throw the men's bunks overboard. They did not object to a few days of supreme discomfort because they received one-third of the catch. We had the bunkers filled with coal and a lot of sacks piled upon the poop,

Holloway, St. Johns, Nfld.

Hauling Sculps over the Ice

and every available place was cleared out for this valuable cargo. The ship began to look dirty, as she had scraped off her paint, and the coal dust and oil had been liberally applied.

It began to blow in the afternoon, with snow squalls. All the men were on board in good time.

During the day I caught a young seal. It had shed nearly all its long white hair and the short, silvery coat underneath looked very pretty. I amused myself plucking the balance of the original coat. The seal appeared to enjoy it. It was killed accidentally a few days later.

March 20th. Blowing hard with snow squalls. A number of pans were broken and many sculps lost, but we secured all we wanted; about one thousand came on board and the 'tween-decks were nearly full.

March 21st. A fine day, but the ship beset, so we cleaned up and finished off the 'tween-decks; then we put all on deck that we thought the ship would carry. This would not have been done had the ship had to go any distance, but all the time we were sealing we had been drifting south, so that we were now a very short distance from St. John's. The Captain and mate would stand on the ice and look her over and then decide that perhaps she would carry a few more, and so on, until there was not much of the *Aurora's* hull above the water. The ice opened in the afternoon and we laid our course for St. John's, steaming half speed. The ship was decorated with flags, the men cheering and singing — at least two hun-

dred of them without shelter; they stood upon the forecastle head and among the sculps on deck. The wind had died away and it was a beautiful afternoon. There were plenty of leads and the ice becoming more open every hour.

March 22nd. During the night we passed through Baccalieu Tickle and in the morning we were close to the coast. As we steamed through the narrows, the men climbed the rigging and cheered. We had accomplished a wonderful thing. The ship was the first in of the year, and was also full. Soon we were tied up at our old berth on the south side, and our crew were busy discharging our cargo of about twenty-eight thousand seals. Each young seal counted one in settling with the crew and each old seal counted two; of course, an old seal took up much more room than two young ones, and on a voyage like this, where the ship could be filled with young, the crew were not anxious to kill old ones. On our two trips, the *Aurora* actually killed 28,150, but the crew were paid for 29,300.

Holloway, St. Johns, Nfld.

A Baby Seal

Holloway, St. Johns, Nfld.

Removing Fat from Sculp

CHAPTER V

THE LABRADOR SEALING

"Now, Brothers, for the icebergs of frozen Labrador
Floating spectral in the moonshine, along the low black shore!
When the mist the rock is hiding and the sharp reef lurks below
And the white squall smites in summer, and the autumn tempests blow."

The work of discharging our cargo began at once — first the sculps on deck, then those in the 'tween-decks and then those in the tanks. Thereafter the ship was given a rough cleaning; new berths were erected in the 'tween-decks and quarter-hatch but not so many as before. The bunkers and tanks were coaled and then we cast about for a crew. All the seals taken on this second cruise would have to be shot, so we did not expect to bring back very many; but the *Aurora* had her own Scotch crew under pay, and they had to be fed, so she might as well be at sea picking up a few seals as lying in the harbor waiting for May 1st. It was not so very easy finding a crew as they would have little to eat and could not possibly earn much money. However, at last we were ready and on Wednesday, April 2nd, sailed. We had heard nothing of the *Arctic*, and very little of any of the other ships. The *Neptune* came in

after us with about 40,000, which was a tremendous cargo, but she was a big ship. There was much more room with our reduced Newfoundland crew, and we steamed out of the narrows for the second time with the ship very much more comfortable than on the first occasion.

I must say the appearance of the *Aurora* at this time was disreputable in the extreme. The paint had been scraped off by the ice, and the filthy sheathing covered the decks, while the fragrant bilge water flowed from her side in a pellucid stream.

The Captain told me that he intended following the seals which were going north towards Labrador and that he expected to fall in with great herds of year-olds, called bedlamers. We left port after breakfast and steamed out onto a calm sea, shaping our course north. During the afternoon we saw patches of ice scattered about and when night came we slowed down and kept a bright lookout.

April 2nd was a blustery day with occasional snow showers. There was no sea, however, to tumble the ship about as there was a good deal of ice. We were easily able to avoid the fields by steaming around them. Some were very heavy looking, having quantities of rafted ice on them. Towards night, it became calm and thick.

April 4th. Steamed dead slow all night as it was thick. In the morning the sea was calm but still foggy. This was pea-soup day. We always had pea soup on Fridays; we also always had fish

The "Aurora" in St. Johns Harbour

for breakfast; it was salt cod. The salt was taken out in some way and then the fish was cut into very small pieces and boiled with broken up sea biscuits and butter, pepper, etc. I have never tasted anything so good since. In fact, I have never since tasted anything so good as the food on the whaler after the first month. There was an absurd arrangement about our meals; it was all right at sea, but in Greenland, when we walked about during the night perhaps as much as during the day, it was distressing. Breakfast was at eight, dinner at noon, and tea at five; there was no regulation meal between five P. M. and eight A. M. I modified this by having a special meal at eleven P. M. At that time I took a pot of coffee from the galley and retired to the pantry for a quiet half hour.

April 5th. The day was fine. A good deal of ice was in sight and occasional seals could be seen. When one was seen ahead, or a few points on either bow, the ship bore down upon it. As we came close, the seal would first raise its head to see what was coming, then raise its body upon its flippers and stare.

A number of men with rifles were always on the forecastle head and of this number I was generally one. If some one did not try too long a shot and frighten it, we always killed the seal. We had a large number of punts on board and one was towed astern in the daytime and with it every seal was picked up. They all counted. Some days we had very good sport and I enjoyed it.

April 6th. Sunday. Duff day. We had plum pudding on Sundays and Thursdays. The puddings were not round, but oval. The steward made delicious sauce out of condensed milk and, of course, we had the Spartan sauce with everything. The Captain was very consistent in his observation of Sunday — no unnecessary work was done on that day. If there were whales, we fished, but I never saw a man kept at work on Sunday if it could be avoided. This day we did the usual shooting from the forecastle head. The temptation to shoot first was dreadful. I dare say we picked up fifteen or twenty seals. This was a sad Sunday because of the death of our canary. I was in the cabin when Jack, the steward, discovered the fact. He immediately took the seed box out of the cage to the pantry, filled it and brought it back. Captain Fairweather came down shortly after to breakfast and immediately noticed the absence of the bird, as it was always hopping about and making a noise. Jack was called. A look of surprise came over his face when asked about the canary and he immediately climbed on to the seat and, looking into the cage, said, with tears in his eyes, "Oh, Sir, the poor wee bird is deid;" adding, as he pulled out the drawer, "Well, it is not for want of plenty to eat." I don't think for a moment that the bird died of starvation, but Jack wanted to simplify the post-mortem inquiry by eliminating that possibility. Our steward was a remarkable man and eminently qualified by nature for his position. He could produce a look of absolute

Holloway, St. Johns, Nfld.

The Death of a Berg

innocence or of sympathy at a moment's notice; his *suaviter in modo* would have fitted him for the diplomatic service; and as a dreamer he was without a peer.

There is a great knack about dreaming. To make a reputation and keep it up even on a whaler requires the judgment of a Delphic priest.

It was the presence of Jack, the steward, that gave the atmosphere of a home to the *Aurora's* cabin and we all liked him.

April 7th. I saw a most interesting thing today. It was an old dog hood; to call it Cystophora Cristata might give the describer some relief; but it would convey no idea of this angry-looking creature as he reared up and gazed at us. How we all resisted firing until he had exhibited himself, I don't know; but when he was looking perfectly terrible and fifty yards away, a dozen copper-nosed bullets found their billets about his head and neck. He was 7½ feet long and a tremendous size around the shoulders. The bag on his head, when fully distended, must have stood eight or nine inches, and extended from the muzzle to four inches behind the eyes. The hood is only found on the male. It is considered ornamental by the females of the same species, but horrible looking by all other animals, I am sure. The beast added about 400 pounds to our little cargo, but the animal, skin and all, certainly weighed seven or eight hundred. During the day we killed quite a number of hoods, but the first was the largest. We did not make much of a run, but dodged about and picked things up. A

young hood is rather blue-looking on the back and white underneath.

The engine slowed down at night, as usual.

April 8th. This was one of the most lovely days, with bright sunshine, and there was dazzling ice in every direction. To the east of us we saw a beautiful barque under canvas; she was playing our game, dodging about and picking up seals. As she was not a steamer, and had a small crew, she was consequently inexpensive to work; there was no reason why she should not pay her owners well, especially if she got amongst the hoods, five or six of which would yield a ton of oil. We kept out to her, and finding she was the *Maud* of Dundee, I was sent on board to hear the news. I was hospitably entertained by the captain, who gave me some old Dundee papers, but those I brought from the *Aurora* were much more recent. When I returned, I saw a funny thing happen. We had a Newfoundland cook, Jack; he had a triangular face with the base up; a tuft of hair grew from the apex and was the only decoration. With his long shaved upper lip, he had an amusing look and he was a character.

The ship was bearing down towards ice upon which there was a young hood. It had been injured and made no effort to escape. Thinking it dead, no one fired and we were almost on to it when Jack, looking over the side, saw it. He had not killed a seal that season, so, seizing a gaff, he leaped on to the pan and we all cheered. As Jack

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Berg on the Coast of Newfoundland

lit on the ice, it broke in two. The seal slid gracefully off its half, but Jack's half, almost submerged, swung around under the ship's quarter, where the propeller was threshing away. Jack paused for a moment between Scylla and Charybdis, and then giving a wild leap, he disappeared in the sea as far from the propeller as he could jump. It was most amusing to see this big man give his wild leap; he was fished out by the punt astern. A small matter, like a man being half drowned, always amused these simple people so much.

I have said that the Newfoundlanders were not over-fed on this trip. We had, for cabin use, numerous quarters of Dundee beef lashed in our tops. They kept splendidly up there. One morning the steward reported a quarter of our Dundee beef stolen. One of the Newfoundland cooks was sent for at once and I heard the conversation between the angry Captain and the astonished cook. I heard the cook report every morning how he was on the track of a thief: "Begorra, sor, I have my eye on him;" or, "Begorra, sor, I could put my hand on the man," and so on until we got back without the thief having been turned over; I heard afterwards that the cook certainly could have at any moment put his hand on the man who took the beef.

April 9th. This was one of the most interesting days I spent. At breakfast, I heard the captain and the mate discussing blinks, that is, reflections. For instance, an ice blink at sea would

mean a sort of whitish reflection in the sky over an area of ice, or a water blink would be a dark reflection in the sky over a dark area. We were surrounded by ice and were approaching a dark blink. Was it water or seals? Before breakfast was over, the report came from the crow's-nest that the seals were ahead. I went aloft and saw an extraordinary sight. The ice ahead of us appeared to be positively black with seals. They covered acres and acres. We steamed right up to them and then about twenty men, with rifles, went on to the ice and a lot of others followed to sculp and haul the sculps to the ship. This ice was not solid but made up of thousands of pans all detached. They were generally touching in places, but two or three sprawls would bring any individual seal to some sort of a hole through which it could escape; therefore, it had to be killed instantly or it would disappear. The shooting began at once, the men kneeling down and opening up at the nearest animals. Just as fast as they could consume ammunition, they fired at seals close at hand, and, as these disappeared, at those farther away. There was far too much shooting for much result. Presently they began to get closer. A would kneel down and fire as fast as possible so as to use as much ammunition as he could before B would pass him. B would then rush past and begin shooting, and so on. Now, with regard to this rushing about, — we were travelling on pans of ice of all sizes, some a few feet square, some as large as a table, some

twenty times that size, but we certainly had to watch where we were going. When the men scattered, they shot better, but it was much more dangerous, as the express bullets were singing about everywhere. I had two men who took me off to one side and who gave me the best shooting I ever enjoyed. The seals were inclined to bask in the sun and enjoy themselves; so, if we went about it quietly, we could easily stalk a pan and advance to within fifty or seventy-five yards; then, if we shot carefully and only hit heads, we would not disturb the others. Should we wound one, it would not only go down itself but would frighten the others on the same pan. I shot off a number of entire pans by quietly getting close and then picking them off.

The seal, properly hit, just drops its head, while the others hold theirs up for you. This was warm work and the barrel of the rifle became so hot that I had constantly to put it on the snow to cool off. I watched some of the Newfoundland men shooting when we started and saw several of them miss every shot. All they did was to endanger their fellow men and wound an occasional seal; of course there were some crack shots among them, but it would have paid well to have tested the ability of all before serving out rifles to them. As there was not a cloud in the sky, we were greatly sunburnt and several had a touch of snow-blindness in spite of wearing colored glasses. We probably picked up three or four hundred seals, and had there been about eight or ten men who under-

stood the use of firearms, they would have killed a thousand easily.

The sealing cap worn by the Dundee men was very suitable. The peak was covered with lamb's wool dyed black, so when turned down it absorbed a great deal of the glare. Wool had to be wound around the metal work of the colored glasses we wore on account of the cold.

April 10th. Nothing makes one rest like a hard day's work in the open air. My shoulder was black and blue with firing and my ears rang with the noise while my eyes smarted and my face burned, but I slept like a log until seven bells.

The ship had not moved all night. We were off the coast of Labrador, but out of sight of land. There was a great deal of ice everywhere and by dawn we were steaming north as fast as possible in the effort to overtake our game. By noon the seals were in sight and we went through the same performance as the day before. I did not attempt it with the main body, but with two good men went off in a slightly different direction. The express was certainly a good rifle, and its trajectory very flat, when we consider the powder. I examined a great many wounds that day and in every case found the bullet had expanded well if it had hit anything hard. These seals were nearly all bedlamers and we did not kill any hoods either of these days, although we had picked up quite a number coming up the coast. This was a shorter day, and we did not kill so

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Peculiar Berg on Labrador Coast

many. It was quite late when the ship took the last of her men on board, for they had become scattered. One man had fallen in several times and was very much exhausted. However, I was able to make him swallow some rum and he soon revived. A sailor is very feeble and dissolution near at hand when a little rum cannot be coaxed down with a spoon or other suitable instrument —even then I would not advise leaving the bottle close to him while looking for the spoon, lest, during his unconscious struggles, he should spill it.

April 11th. We were always on the lookout for the *Arctic*, but saw nothing of her. Before leaving St. John's we heard that the *Thetis* had been sold to the American Government for the Greely relief expedition, so she would not appear among the sealers that year. Captain Fairweather's brother was master of her, so he was disappointed.

We kept north in our effort to overtake the seals, the barometer falling a little towards evening, and a swell coming in from the southeast. We were well on the outer or eastern edge of the ice, as the Captain did not want to take any chance of being jammed among heavy floes coming down the coast. During the evening we had a most wonderful sunset. The sky was red not only to the west, but nearly all over, and the reflection on the ice was magnificent. The frozen sea is fascinating when the sun goes down and before dark; also by moonlight, or bright starlight.

During the day the glare is too great but a moonlight night on a frozen sea is the grandest sight possible. The weird sounds caused by the ever restless ice are a fitting accompaniment. On this Friday night, the sounds caused by the ever increasing sea, crunching the pack up, were rather startling at times, but we kept pretty well out of it, so we were safe. There was quite a little motion on board, owing to the swell, and we steamed easy ahead all night, going full speed at daybreak, and by noon had the satisfaction of finding our seals. We went off, but not quite as usual. The roll of the sea had crunched the pack up and broken all the large sheets of ice, so we were obliged to jump from one pan to another while they were rising and falling on the long swell of the Atlantic. There was nothing sudden or uncertain about the motion. The long heavy rollers lifted one up and lowered one down, and when between them, one could not see very far. Now occurred a sort of stalking that I have never seen described, i. e., running after a large wave and keeping perfectly still when the following wave overtook one; then repeating the stalk, always running in the trough between the two waves. In this manner I did some efficient work and shot a great many seals.

Most of the time was spent watching where to put my feet; but, on feeling the rise coming, I stood perfectly still and watched the seals. I was regaled with accounts of men who had been injured and cut in two by this sort of thing; but

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Berg off Belle Isle

we did not meet with the slightest accident and every one was picked up by sundown. The ship managed to follow through the ice pretty well, picking up a few seals here and there, as they had been sculped, so that we added several hundreds to our collection.

April 13th. Sunday. The day was fine and we picked up occasional seals but did not find a herd. It was a complete day of rest for all hands. The ice to the west of us looked very heavy and the Captain was careful to avoid it. We lay to at night, but by daybreak on Monday morning we were dodging north again.

April 14th. I had my first shot at a walrus, sea-horse, as it is called. Shortly after breakfast the usual rifles were on the forecastle head when the officer in the crow's-nest called down that he saw a walrus. The ship was kept down on it, and presently we all saw the big animal with his long white tusks. In this case, they were very long and could be seen from a great distance. He was on a pan with open water all around, so we steamed straight at him. As we approached, he raised himself higher and higher on his flippers and disappeared after having received a fearful fusillade, at less than a ship's length. I would have liked the chance of examining his skin just to count the hits and see the effect. We heard the thud of striking bullets, but the walrus gave a plunge and was seen no more.

We did the usual amount of sealing from the ship, but had not any men on the ice. Two or

three times we had several punts out, but they did not pick up very many.

April 15th. We dodged back and forth amongst the floating ice, keeping a little closer to land but not seeing much of interest. There was a very large floe which bore evidence of great rafting; between the hummocks on it there was fresh water, regular ponds with connecting channels. I was on this floe, as we shot a few seals on it, so tasted the water, which was sweet and good. I have often seen quite big ponds on floes fast to bergs, and we took water on board sometimes from these.

For the next few days we steamed south without seeing anything of interest. The weather was cold, but fine, and the ice less as we neared St. John's. We were careful after dark and generally steamed slow. The crew were employed in cleaning up.

April 19th. Saturday. Arrived at St. John's in the morning and took our usual berth. Our entire catch of seals for the two trips was 28,150, but the crew were paid for 29,300 as there were some large old seals and they counted more.

There was great news for us on our arrival. I have already mentioned the sale of the *Thetis* to the American Government. We now received orders from Dundee to take the place of the *Thetis* and proceed to Davis Straits. The gear removed from this ship was being sent out to us by an Allan boat. We were to keep our eyes open for the lost Greely, as a reward had been offered

Holloway, St. Johns, Nfld.

Fish Drying Places at St. Johns

by the United States for any whaler picking him up.

I certainly never intended going on a long trip when sailing, and the Captain told me I could leave if I wished, but there was a fascination about the whole thing that I enjoyed.

The *Aurora* had been getting more comfortable all the time,—the first awful experience of a fearful Atlantic winter passage with the ship loaded to the scuppers, then the crowded ship at the first sealing, and the much pleasanter trip to Labrador.

Now I could see that the ship would be very comfortable with only her own crew, and the deck clear of boats, as it would be on the next part of the cruise, so I decided to go. It took a very short time to put our seals out, and, as it was Saturday afternoon by that time, all the work ceased until Monday morning.

I heard an amusing story about a man being nearly drowned in a tank of oil. A sealer came in and four of her tanks nearest to the boiler had the sculps break down into oil, owing to the heat. When the crew were discharging cargo it was the custom for a man to jump into a tank and throw the sculps out. Coming to the first of these tanks, and looking in, some sculps could be seen, and, never suspecting that these were a few floating on the surface, the man jumped in and disappeared under, but was presently fished out, every one thoroughly enjoying the incident except, of course, the leading man.

CHAPTER VI

SOMETHING ABOUT THE GREELY RELIEF EXPEDITION

"But 'tis not mine to tell their tale of grief,
Their constant peril and their scant relief,
Their days of danger and their nights of pain;
Their manly courage e'en when deemed in vain."

One of the interesting things about our trip to the Arctic Seas was the possibility of seeing Greely or of possibly finding him or something about him. I shall here give a brief outline of what had been done up to this time towards rescuing the gallant explorer and his intrepid followers.

Every one I met in Newfoundland appeared to know a great deal about Greely, because he had started from there three years before in a St. John's ship, and because both of the previous relief expeditions had been in St. John's ships, and a great many of the Newfoundland men had been with them, and several of our crew at the sealing had been on the *Proteus*. One heard the Greely expedition and its relief discussed every day. The consensus of opinion was that as the navy had the matter in hand now, they would succeed. The Newfoundlanders, being a maritime people, could not understand how soldiers could

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Removing Fat from the Sculps

be expected to make a success of a voyage of discovery or relief, and the two previous relief trips had been unfortunate. The *raison d'être* of the Greely expedition was briefly as follows:

At a certain scientific conference held in Europe a series of circumpolar stations had been decided upon, from which, owing to their proximity to the revolutionary axis of our globe, interesting and useful observations could be made of physical phenomena. As these observations were to be made at the same time in a great many different places, they would probably prove of greater interest and value than those supplied intermittently by expeditions. Now the United States was to have two stations, one at Point Barrow on the Behring Sea side, and one at Lady Franklin Bay on the Davis Strait side. A young officer in the American army, Lieutenant Greely, had volunteered for and been selected to take charge of the Lady Franklin Bay expedition. The steamer *Proteus*, a Newfoundland sealer, had been chartered to convey the party north. She was a Dundee-built ship, about the size of the *Aurora*, and her captain and crew were St. John's men. They left St. John's on July 7, 1881, having on board Lieutenant Greely and twenty-four men, with supplies for three years. They made the most unprecedented time going north. Crossing the dangerous Melville Bay in thirty-six hours and getting to within a few miles of her destination on August 4th, a few days later she landed the explorers, and having successfully accom-

plished her mission she returned to her home port.

Melville Bay, the bugbear of many Arctic voyages, is a very different thing when crossed in June by whalers from what it is in July and August; but the whalers must reach their northern station by the end of June, so cannot wait for the ice to drift south.

It was arranged that a relief expedition should go north in 1882 and another in 1883, while the third in 1884 should convey the party back. Now these two previous relief expeditions formed the topic of conversation in St. John's when the inhabitants became tired of discussing seals and politics, and I soon heard a good deal about them. For the first, in 1882, our friend and late neighbor, the *Neptune*, had been chartered. She was splendid in every way and did as much as any ship of the period could have done towards making the thing a success; but the orders were to leave two hundred fifty rations at Littleton Island and two hundred fifty at the furthest point reached if the ship failed to get to Lady Franklin Bay, and that should they fail to reach the Bay, the balance of the stores were to be brought back to St. John's. A private in the army had been selected to take charge of this expedition. As he had been accustomed to obeying orders to the letter, he deposited the two hundred fifty rations at Littleton Island, and two hundred fifty at Cape Sabine, the most northern point reached. Then, as they were unable to reach Lady Franklin Bay,

he carefully brought back all the balance of the cargo of food sent up for the starving Greely, twenty days' provisions only having been left in the Arctic and this according to orders and probably—" Well, though the soldier knew some one had blundered."

The authorities were a little anxious now about the brave lieutenant, so they began to make preparations for the 1883 relief, and this time they chartered the *Proteus* and also sent a small navy ship called the *Yantic*, a craft rather unfitted for Arctic work. The *Proteus* was commanded by Captain Pike (the St. John's man who had made such a record taking Greely up) and had her Newfoundland crew. This expedition was in charge of a soldier, Lieutenant Garlington, as the Government wished it all to be an army affair. Owing to an accident, a sergeant selected to go on the *Proteus* was disabled, and Lieutenant Colwell, U. S. N., was added to the expedition in his place. This was fortunate, as things turned out. One of our quartermasters on the *Aurora* during the first sealing trip had been one of the crew of the *Proteus*, and he gave me a lot of interesting information about it. They left St. John's about the end of June and had a nice passage to Disco. In fact, they found the road so open that they reached Cape Sabine in about twenty-five days. As they were in a hurry to reach their destination, Lady Franklin Bay, little time was spent here and no stores were landed. When the ship moved out into Kane Sea she was caught almost

at once in heavy polar ice. The officers soon realized that the ship's position was serious, so began to take supplies out of the hold. While so engaged the side of the ship burst in and she filled. The pressure of the ice kept her from sinking for a few hours, then some change of wind or tide opened the ice and down she went. A great lot of provisions and stores had been thrown overboard on to the ice, much being lost in so doing. After the ship went down her crew took their own boats and the soldiers took theirs. Colwell, with the help of both parties, succeeded in landing a lot of provisions and stores at Cape Sabine, and here he cached five hundred rations. It was said that many of the soldiers did not know how to row, and that some members of the crew of the *Proteus* behaved very badly after the loss of the ship. They probably did not consider that the saving of government supplies was any of their business, and some of them even are said to have looted these supplies. After a rest at Cape Sabine, the entire party proceeded south to meet the *Yantic*, the supporting vessel. Very little attention had been paid to her, as she was slow and ill adapted for the ice, and it was thought that she probably would never attempt Melville Bay. However, she had crossed this and was following them well, and the series of misunderstandings and misinterpretations of orders which prevented the *Proteus* people going south from meeting the *Yantic* coming north, makes a most remarkable story.

Valentine.

An Arctic Monarch

Lieutenant Garlington and his party, being separated from the crew of the *Proteus* for a time, crossed over to Littleton Island and left a record of the loss of their ship. They then joined the others and proceeded to Cape York. It was here decided to push on to the Danish settlements as they did not think the *Yantic* would come as far north as Cape York. In the meantime, the *Yantic* had passed up to Littleton Island and picked up Garlington's record. She then zigzagged about looking for the boats, and passing Cape York on her way down without calling, she proceeded to Upernavik. As the boats were not there, her captain decided to push on home as the season was getting late, so sailed to Disco. The boat party at Cape York having decided to go south divided. Lieutenant Colwell, taking a whale boat and crew, struck across Melville Bay, and after a most difficult and dangerous passage succeeded in reaching Upernavik the day after the *Yantic* had left. He followed her, however, for a week, and overtaking her at Disco, brought her back to Upernavik, where the balance of the *Proteus* people had arrived, and from there they returned to St. John's. Now the result of all this had been, in 1882, the deposit of ten days' provisions at Littleton Island and ten days' provisions at Cape Sabine, the remainder being brought back. In 1883 the *Proteus* had not deposited anything during her life, but after her destruction Lieutenant Colwell had succeeded in caching at Cape Sabine five hundred rations or twenty days' supplies saved from

the *Proteus*. The *Yantic* had been up to Littleton Island and back without leaving anything behind. Another year had passed and now the rescue of Greely became imperative. The affair had been handed over to the navy, and Commander Schley was taking command. The Dundee ship *Thetis* and the sealer *Bear* had been bought and added to the navy. A collier, the *Lough Garry*, had been chartered to take coal up for the expedition, and the *Alert*, given by the British Government, was also going. At the same time a reward was offered for any whaler picking Greely up. The relief ships, except the *Alert*, were coming to St. John's and would sail about the same time as the whalers, and as we all knew a good deal about the circumstances, we were certainly all deeply interested in the outcome. It was generally believed among our people that Greely would now be at Cape York or Carey Islands, and the *Aurora* stood as good a chance as any other ship of getting there first. Commander Schley had charge of the expedition and would sail on the *Thetis*, while Lieutenant Emory would command the *Bear*, of which ship Lieutenant Colwell would be an officer.

The whalers going to Davis Strait were—

Arctic	*Narwhal*
Aurora	*Nova Zembla*
Cornwallis	*Polynia*
Esquimaux	*Triune*
Jan Mayen	*Wolf of St. John's*

CHAPTER VII

THE BOTTLENOSE FISHING

"The Arctic sun rose broad above the wave,
The breeze now sank, now whispered from his cave."

Newfoundland looked more attractive in April than it did when we left. Going about was pleasanter and we saw everything worth seeing in the neighborhood of St John's. On board, great changes took place. All the sheathing was torn off and the ship cleaned inside and out. Her overhauling was complete. The rigging was set up, the masts were scraped and oiled and the ship painted. The punts were all cleared away and our beautiful whale-boats took their place.

The *Aurora* was peculiar in having two boats, one above the other, on each quarter. We fished ten boats altogether, four down each side and two upper quarter boats.

The crew of a whale-boat is six, a harpooner, a boat-steerer and four men pulling. The harpooner rows until ordered by the boat-steerer to stand by his gun. In the bow the harpoon-gun is mounted on a swivel, and fast to the harpoon is the "foregoer." This is a very pliable, untarred rope, about two and a half inches in circumference and eighteen fathoms long. It is coiled in

a tub, sitting on the port bow of the boat, while on the starboard side, in a convenient rest, lies the hand-harpoon.

The bollard head, around which a turn of the line is taken, is an important structure; it stands in the bow, beside the gun. Many a boat has gone down through the line fouling at the bollard head.

To the "foregoer" or "foreganger," is attached the whale line. The term "line" means, generally, one rope 120 fathoms long, and there are five of these carried in each boat, one and a half being stowed amidships and the rest aft. They are 2½-inch ropes, and tarred. The greatest care must be observed in coiling these lines, and by the line manager in the boat as the line runs out.

A struck whale generally starts at about seven or eight miles an hour. Should the rope, running out at this rate, uncoil unevenly, a kink in it might foul one of the crew and instantly take him down. This has often happened.

Each boat has several six-foot lances ready for use when the whale is exhausted; the idea being, to sever with the long sharp lance some of the large vessels, thus bleeding the animal to death.

The oars in a whale-boat work on mats on the gunwale, and a thole-pin is used instead of row-locks. An arrangement on the oar keeps it from slipping through the grummet on the thole-pin, when it is let go. The mat is to prevent noise. A little piggin is used for bailing the boat, and, when hoisted on a boat hook, is the signal for

more lines. The shaft of the harpoon is made of soft, Swedish iron, so that it can be twisted in any conceivable way without breaking.

A little barrel of bread and cheese is carried in each boat and this must not be broached until after the boat has been away from the ship a considerable time; water is also carried. The great long steering oar is very important. With it a dexterous boat-steerer can do wonders. He can sweep the boat around very quickly or can scull noiselessly up to a whale when the oars or paddles would frighten it away. The steering oar works on a pin and mat, as do the others.

The whale fisher has many incentives. As he is generally a man who has to labor for a living, and as he is partly paid by the result of his work, the capture of a whale means to him a good deal, probably several pounds. This stimulates him. Again, the sooner he fills the ship, the sooner he sails for home. While there is not much chance of filling the ship nowadays, the securing of a good summer catch probably saves him a weary, cold autumn, fishing on the west side. Last, but not least, the pursuit of whales is often attended with great danger, which is one of the principal factors of good sport. The average game hunter is not exposed to as great risk as the average whaler.

What danger is there in the pursuit of any member of the deer or antelope family, and what chance has the animal in these days of high power rifles? Sometimes the whale has no chance for

its life and the destruction of such a huge creature is not exciting, but, generally, there is danger, as the history of the industry proves. Hunting rhino or buffalo is better sport than hunting deer because the former may charge and kill one. The whale hunter may be snatched to instant death by a foul line, or starved to death in an open boat, and these possibilities elevate the sport greatly.

One cannot help sometimes being sorry for the animal one has killed, the excitement of the chase over and the beast lying dead, especially when only the head is wanted, and when everything else must be left to spoil. A dead whale means creature comforts to many poor people; and I, personally, have had more qualms at the escape of a wounded buck than I have had over all the whales we killed.

Fishing for bottlenose, the year before (1883), the *Aurora* lost two men, and the *Esquimaux* lost one this year. While we were killing our whales off Hudson Straits, he was snatched out of the boats and never seen again. A few years before, this man's father was lost from the same ship.

In approaching a black fish, the eye must be avoided. Going " eye on " is a serious matter, as the whale is not such a fool as it looks, and the tremendously powerful tail can smite with terrific force. The lifting power of the tail has not been much studied; but a chance to observe it occurred on the *Nova Zembla* some time ago when the mate got his boat over one. Those who saw

the accident say that the tail was lifted without any apparent effort, throwing the boat many feet up and breaking the bottom out of it. Fortunately the occupants were spilt out, and fell clear of the danger zone, because the fish struck the boat again and reduced it to match wood.

A week after our arrival, the *Aurora* had been pretty well cleaned and greatly changed in appearance. A small spruce tree was fastened to each masthead, the end of each yard-arm, and to the point of the jib-boom. Every one now had an easy time until the actual sailing day. Quite a number of vessels of all sorts had arrived, as the ice had disappeared from the coast; amongst them was the Allen steamer *Newfoundland*, from Halifax, bringing us English mail. The Greely relief ship *Bear* had also come in.

May 1st. Thursday. The *Aurora* was receiving finishing touches. We were lying at the south side but our launch had steam up and took us across when we wanted to go.

May 2. Taking a gun, I went with Dr. Crawford, of the *Arctic*, straight up the hill from the ship and found on the other side a growth of little trees so dense as to be practically impenetrable in places. I shot a hare crossing a little open place, and saw a splendid big hawk flying about, but it never came within shot. Returning with the hare, the Captain stopped me just as I was going on board. A hare was too unlucky, so I gave it to a man on the wharf. Captain Guy was standing on the *Arctic* and, seeing this, came on shore

and cut the hare's feet off, throwing them on to the *Aurora;* he was ever fond of a joke. The most unlucky parts of this unlucky animal in no way interfered with our prosperity, however.

May 3rd. As the *Lough Garry* had come in I went on board. She was an ordinary iron or steel steamer of about 1,000 tons and had been chartered to take 500 tons of coal north for the relief expedition. She was not fortified or specially prepared in any way for the work, but still she managed to get along very well as far as her services were required. Going on board, I encountered the mate, who recognized me, he having been the mate of the *Thetis* who had given me the information I sought about whaling while in Dundee the autumn before. He showed me over the ship and told me many interesting facts about a whaling voyage.

The *Esquimaux* sailed this day and the *Narwhal* had already gone. The desire to find Greely was certainly starting us all north a couple of weeks before the usual time.

May 4th. Sunday. The *Bear* sailed. She was unlike any other ship going north this year, because she had her black funnel forward of the main mast and her crow's-nest on the foremast. The *Arctic* had her funnel in the same place, but her crow's-nest was on the mainmast. Their rigs also differed. These are small matters, but we soon could recognize any of the ships a long way off by their little peculiarities. During the day I went on board the *Polynia.* She was ready for sea and lying in the harbor. Captain Walker,

Ice Pans

Greely Relief Ships Thetis and Bear

who had command of her, was a naturalist and sportsman and it was a pleasure meeting him. She proceeded north before morning.

May 5th. Spent some time on board the *Arctic.* She was ready for sea and looked clean and nice with her spacious decks and cabins — very unlike a whaler. Her lines were graceful, and she had powerful engines, but she could not have stood as much in ice as the *Aurora.* Captain Guy told me about killing a whale with an old Eskimo harpoon buried in its blubber. He gave me this interesting souvenir of my voyage and told me about Captain McKay of Dundee killing a whale in which he found a harpoon with which the fish had been struck forty-two years before. This iron is now in the Dundee Museum.

May 6th and 7th. Took my last look at St. John's and made my cabin comfortable. I had now been in it for three months, so knew exactly what was required.

There does not seem to be any connection between a whaler and Florida water; but still I venture to say that there was not a sailor on our ship who had not from one to half a dozen bottles of this commodity. Some were for trade with the Eskimos and some for their sweethearts at home. The Captain had laid in a quantity of colored handkerchiefs and such things, which the men were permitted to purchase afterwards from the slop-chest for purposes of barter. The slop-chest was the ship's shop and was superintended by the second mate. One could purchase

a wonderful lot of useful things from this institution.

May 8th. After breakfast, all being ready, the *Aurora* sailed for the whale fishing. In Scotland, a fish means a salmon, but in Greenland, a black whale is always spoken of as a fish, never anything else. We sailed out of the narrows and turned north. It was blowing a little from the southeast, so there was some swell. We got square sails on the ship presently, and with this breeze on her quarter, made good time, the engines going full speed.

Our intention was to try the bottlenose whale fishing off Resolution Island at the mouth of Hudson's Straits, for a few days, then go over to the Greenland side and follow the usual route. As there were many bergs coming down and quantities of field ice at this season, we kept rather well away from the coast, along which it came. At night the canvas was taken off the ship and a bright lookout kept for ice. For the next three days we steered north. The weather was fine and the sea smooth. Going up the Labrador coast, we saw some heavy floes, but kept well to the east of them and did not sight land. We did not see anything of interest, so it was rather monotonous.

May 12th. It was a lovely morning when I came on deck, with the wind from the southeast. We had our fore and afters set and were steaming full speed. Astern of us was the *Nova Zembla* and we were towing her, an act of brotherly love.

Holloway, St. Johns, Nfld.

Off the Coast of Labrador

I had seen the ship in Dundee and was struck by her beauty. She and the *Jan Mayen* were very handsome little ships, and she looked far better at sea than in dock. We towed her part of the day. During the afternoon, the wind died down and the evening was beautiful; not a breath of air, but some swell rolling in from the southeast and the surface of the sea like glass. The people to-day were employed coiling lines in boats and arranging fishing gear as we might see the bottlenose whales any time.

May 13th. A beautiful calm day. The men were getting ready the whale-boats and filling the bunkers. We were well off Cape Chidley, the northeast corner of Labrador, in the morning. In the evening a school of bottlenose whales was seen, and six boats were lowered away. Two of the boats immediately filled as they had been out of the water so long, but the others pulled after the whales. I was on the bridge watching the sport. It was splendid. The ship and boats rising and falling on a rather heavy swell, the surface of the water like oil, the boats freshly painted, and the harpoons glistening in the sun, presented an interesting picture of the sea; while the school of very lively little whales rolling about like porpoises and then disappearing, to come up suddenly, gave it animation.

The boats had several shots, but they were quick and difficult. One, however, was captured by Alex. McKechnie, the second mate, and after a short play, killed and brought alongside. This

beast (Hyperoodon Rostratus, or the northern sperm whale) is small, but of remarkable appearance, having a long round beak, which protrudes from the lower part of its large head. Its oil is very good; that flowing from the cancellous bones of the head solidifying on deck at a comparatively high temperature, and when solid, looking like spermaceti. Many of the men took bottles full of this oil for use in future sprains and bruises. Late in the evening another whale was killed by Thors, and, from the numbers we saw around, there was no reason why the *Aurora* should not have picked up a profitable cargo in this neighborhood, but the desire for the valuable whalebone took us to the north.

May 14th. We were off Frobisher's Bay and after the little whales again, and another was captured. I was not in the boats at all at this fishing, as the movement of the whales was so fast that they capsized boats frequently and only experienced oarsmen were wanted. I was told that more men lost their lives at this than at the right whale fishing. We learned afterwards that the *Nova Zembla* picked up seven here, while the *Arctic* bagged seventeen. The whale killed in the morning by McLean was over twenty feet long. The other two were smaller. The heads were brought on board so I had a good look at them.

I saw white stalactites of spermaceti hanging from them to stalagmite incrustations of the same on deck, and I noticed that the oil was free from smell.

Captain Guy of the "Arctic"

The neighborhood of Resolution Island was notorious for its awful currents, and the rise and fall of tide about the western end of Hudson Straits made navigation on these comparatively uncharted waters exceedingly dangerous.

I once heard Captain Guy tell of a narrow escape he had in the neighborhood of the upper Savage Islands. From the barrel, he saw a rock ahead, and ordered the lead cast. Three fathoms was found, so he backed off and anchored. In a few hours he was astonished to find an island where the submerged rock had been, and he afterwards learned from a reliable source that the rise and fall of tide at this place was over forty feet. Caribou were abundant on the north coast of the straits, and musk-ox were also found. Sometimes whalers coming down for the southwest fishing, in the autumn, killed numbers of both. The caribou was the barren land variety, and some of the heads were enormous. In this species the beam was long and straggly, and the palmation was not very pronounced.

CHAPTER VIII

THE *CHIEFTAIN* DISASTER

"We have fed our sea for a thousand years,
And she calls us, still unfed,
Though there is never a wave of all our waves
But marks our English dead."

— KIPLING.

It may be of interest to recount here the story of the *Chieftain's* mishap, which was the worst accident of the year.

The *Chieftain* was one of the Dundee whaling fleet. When we left she was fitting out for the Greenland sealing and bottlenose whaling.

Leaving Dundee on March 6th, under the command of Captain Gellatley, she lost four of her boats, on May 26th, in a fog.

These made their way to Iceland. One, in charge of the captain, landed at Brimness. A second, in charge of Alex. Bain, a harpooner, arrived at Tonsberg, having lost overboard her boatsteerer, David Buchan. A third landed at Ramfarhofu with all alive. The fourth was picked up, and in her there was but one survivor. When this boat left the ship there were three men in her. One died and was duly committed to the deep; another fell into a lethargy which continued so long that McIntosh, the survivor, though hardly able to move his benumbed legs, crawled to the

bow of the boat to find out what was the trouble, but found him dead.

Fearing lest he might yield to the temptation of using the body for food, by a great effort he succeeded in heaving it overboard. The boat was picked up on the fourteenth day off the Iceland coast by a passing ship; but McIntosh was compelled to have both legs amputated as mortification had set in. It is terrible to think of what this brave fellow must have endured drifting about in a small boat over this lonely and stormy sea, half frozen and with hardly any food.

The following is the account given by Captain Gellatley of the cause of the accident, and of his experiences during the awful trip to Iceland.

A school of whales was observed on Monday, 26th of May, and the afternoon being fine, four boats went out in pursuit—one under the command of Captain Gellatley; the second under the charge of Thomas Elder, the second mate; John Taylor, specksioneer, was in charge of the third; and Alexander Bain, harpooner, of the fourth.

In the course of a short time the captain's boat got fast to a whale, and also the specksioneer's. The second mate assisted the captain. After some time the whale was killed and towed to the ship, which was reached about three o'clock in the morning. By this time a dense fog had settled down, and after his crew had breakfasted, Captain Gellatley set out to look for the three boats, giving directions that if the fog continued the vessel should be kept in her position, so as to

enable them to find her; but that she was to bear down towards the boats if the mist lifted. Knowing the bearings of the boats, Captain Gellatley came up to them after rowing for fully two hours, and found that the whale was still alive and causing great trouble. Three additional harpoons were fired into it, and in the course of the forenoon it was killed, and the four boats started in the direction of the ship with the whale in tow. In the meantime the weather cleared, and the ship was descried at a distance of about five miles; but in the course of half an hour the fog again came down, and it was so dense that it was impossible to see more than a few yards ahead. Though they pulled from half past ten o'clock in the forenoon until half past four in the afternoon they failed to find the *Chieftain*, and no answering signals were returned to their blasts of fog horns. It was then resolved that one of the boats should proceed eastwards and another westwards for some distance, but they returned without having been able to discover the whereabouts of the ship, notwithstanding the most diligent search. At one time a sound like a whistle was heard in one direction and again in another, and the men got utterly fatigued by their protracted search, a fresh breeze springing up and adding to their discomfort. About eight o'clock in the evening a number of the men confidently declared that they heard a ship's whistle sounding in a northeasterly direction, and the second mate was sent away in the hope of finding the ship. Some time later Cap-

tain Gellatley decided to follow in the same direction, and accordingly the whale was buoyed and a lance with a handkerchief tied to the end of the handle was stuck into the carcass for identification. The three boats then followed in the course taken by the second mate, but they could never catch up to him, though they repeatedly heard the blast of his fog horn. Throughout the night the search was continued without success, and on the morning of the 28th, the crews being fatigued, the three boats were made fast to one another and a deep sea anchor thrown out for the purpose of stopping their way and allowing the men to rest. In the course of the morning James Cairns, an ordinary seaman, accidentally fell overboard, but he was promptly rescued. On the 28th matters began to assume a serious aspect. The crews had then been two days absent from the ship, and their slender stock of food—a small keg of provisions and a six pound tin of preserved meat in each boat—had become exhausted. In consequence of their privations the men became affected with stupor, and with the view of dispelling this the captain ordered the anchor to be hauled in and the boats to be rowed towards the ice. This exercise had a beneficial effect, and it seemed as if it were to result in a happy rescue, for a barque was noticed sailing away to the windward. Signals were made in the hope of attracting attention, but the crews were doomed to disappointment, the fog, which had temporarily cleared, having again fallen and obscured everything from sight. The

weather, too, became boisterous, and the boats were in imminent danger of being crushed by the ice. To save the boats from destruction it was found necessary to row out from under the lee of the floes, and during this time Captain Gellatley narrowly escaped being drowned. Whale-boats are all steered by an oar, and while the captain was steering, his oar was struck by a wave and he was knocked overboard. Fortunately he was rescued before he had been long in the water, but he suffered much from having to remain in his wet clothes during the remainder of the time he was in the boat. All the men were by this time complaining of the benumbed condition of their hands and feet, and by the morning of Friday, 30th, it was hardly possible to keep them awake. That morning the wind shifted to the westward, and as all hope of falling in with the *Chieftain* had been given up, it was decided, as the only chance of saving their lives, to endeavor to sail to Iceland, which was calculated to be about two hundred miles distant. Each of the boats possessed a compass, but there was neither mast nor sail, and in their place a couple of boat-hooks were erected by way of a mast, with the ramrod of the gun as a yard, and the line cover, a piece of canvas about five feet by three feet, had to do duty as a sail. Thus equipped, and with a supply of frozen snow and pieces of ice to quench their thirst, the crews of the three boats set out on their perilous journey, the master giving the directions for steering. They left the ice about five

o'clock in the morning, and were soon scudding along at a rapid rate, there being a strong breeze blowing. About eight o'clock the boat which was in advance was seen to shorten sail, and when the captain came up he was informed that David Buchan, while steering, had been knocked overboard and drowned. An attempt was then made to tow this boat; but the sea was running so high that this jeopardized both. It soon became apparent that the boats would be swamped if they continued in tow, and the captain was obliged to cast the second one adrift, telling the crew they must either hoist sails and make for Iceland along with him or run back for the ice. They preferred to hold on their course, and the sail was again hoisted. The weather continued moderate until between four and five o'clock in the afternoon, when it shifted to the northward and began to blow hard. A heavy sea arose, and through the night it was with the utmost difficulty that the captain kept his boat afloat. At times she was nearly filled, and the men had to keep almost constantly bailing out the water. The stormy weather continued throughout the whole of Friday night and Saturday, and it was found necessary to throw the whale lines overboard to lighten the boat. In the meantime the condition of the men was becoming more and more alarming, and the captain was forced to employ various devices to prevent them from falling into a state of stupor, which would soon have proved fatal. To use the oars was an impossibility on account of

the heavy seas and the rate at which the boat was sailing, and accordingly the captain persuaded the men to hold up their oars by way of exercise. This had the desired effect for some time, but by Sunday morning, the fourth day they had been without food, they were all ready to give up in despair. Captain Gellatley had been steering constantly from Friday morning till Sunday morning, and the fatigue, combined with the privations he endured in common with his crew, began to tell severely upon him. Only those who have had to steer such a boat in a seaway can understand the irksome and laborious nature of the work, and to this must be added the fact that he had to sit in a cramped position the whole time, his legs being bent under him. The captain stated that a peculiar sensation came over him, a haze gathered before his eyes, and an attack of dizziness obliged him to call the boatswain to take his place. After a brief space the boatswain, who was almost prostrated, had to relinquish the task, and the boat was then hove to, and a deep sea anchor, made up of a grappling iron and other articles, was thrown out, with fifty fathoms of line, by which means the boat's head was kept towards the sea. The weather was then moderating, but the waves continued to break over the boat, and it was as much as the men could do to keep her afloat. A few hours later and the gale sprang up afresh, and as there were still no signs of land, the crew resigned themselves to the fate which they deemed to be inevitable. From this state of de-

spair they were ultimately aroused by the news that the land and a schooner were in sight, the sailmaker being the first to make the joyful announcement. This intelligence reanimated the despairing men, and signals were made to the schooner, but without succeeding in attracting the attention of the crew. A direct course was then steered for the land, but owing to the gale ten hours elapsed before it was reached. A new difficulty was then encountered, there being no visible landing-place along that rock-bound coast. A number of the islanders, however, had noticed the boat, and by means of signs they directed the crew to steer for the only available landing-place, a narrow passage with perpendicular rocks on either side, and a horizontal rock forming a sort of bar. The tide was then ebbing, but under the guidance of Captain Gellatley, the boat was safely steered into the narrow harbor. By the assistance of the islanders the crew, who had almost lost the power of their legs, were take to a farmer's hut adjoining, where they were hospitably entertained with such cheer as the house afforded; and the black bread and whale blubber which were set out before them proved a feast to the famishing sailors. The point at which they landed was Brimness, about ten miles distant from Langanaes, and after they had recovered somewhat the islanders made arrangements for transporting them on horseback to the nearest port. However, the Norwegian smack, *Jemima*, of Flekkefjord, hove in sight, and on being sig-

nalled, the captain, Bernard Olsen, readily agreed to take the crew to Seydisfjord, where a steamer was shortly to sail for Scotland. On their arrival at Seydisfjord on the 8th of June, the governor had them conveyed to a hotel, and a messenger was dispatched for a doctor, who arrived in the course of two days, his journey requiring twenty-four hours to accomplish. Under his treatment Captain Gellatley and his crew made a satisfactory recovery, and on the 12th they left Seydisfjord on board the mail steamer *Thyra*, for Granton.

CHAPTER IX

A GREENLAND SETTLEMENT

"The shuddering tenant of the frigid zone
Boldly proclaims the happiest spot his own;
Extols the treasures of his stormy seas,
And his long nights of revelry and ease."

We were now crossing Davis Straits and felt that the whaling voyage had fairly begun. Reference was seldom made to the places already visited, but those we expected to see were discussed, and stories told of previous experiences there. Nothing was spoken of but Greenland and its settlements.

The weather was very cold and on Thursday, May 15th, snow squalls reminded us of our latitude. The wind was fair, however, and the ship made good time under steam and some canvas.

Friday, May 16th. The morning was fine and the men of the watch were employed coaling the bunkers; coal dust was thick in the 'tween-decks and the tarts we had for tea were black with it as the galley opened off the 'tween-decks. In spite of their color, however, they were better tarts than any I ever tasted on shore.

As we expected to be on the Greenland coast the following day, a few remarks about the country may not be out of place.

The west coast settlements had prospered under the fostering care of the Moravian missionaries and the Danish Government and were divided into two districts, the northern and the southern, Holstenborg, to which we were bound, being the northern settlement of the southern district. The most northern settlements of the northern district had native governors, but the southern had Danish, and inspectors supervised the work of these.

One or two ships from Copenhagen visited the coast every year with supplies, taking back oil and skins.

We have all sung about the icy mountains of Greenland, and most of us have in a vague way connected the country with whales, without having any idea of how great this whaling industry was some years ago. In the appendix it will be seen that Great Britain alone sent one hundred and fifty-nine ships to Greenland waters in 1819, and, of course, the Norwegians and Dutch, the Danes, Germans and others also profited by the fisheries. Many words in the modern whaler's vocabulary are of Dutch origin, as these hardy people were conspicuous among the most daring followers of this dangerous trade.

Greenland has a past, but its history, viewed through the mists of centuries, and always more or less traditional, is anything but distinct.

The country was discovered toward the end of the tenth century; and a banished Norwegian, called Erick, wintered at what is now called Erick

Underwood.

Greenland Village Scene

Sound, shortly after. The unscrupulous Erick, in order to promote colonization, called the new country Greenland. A fleet of twenty-five sail started for the country with colonists. Many were lost, but about half of them settled there and were joined by others, forming quite a colony.

Christianity was introduced about 1121 and a bishop was appointed. By degrees the colonists in the south formed other colonies, churches were built, and the people prospered for a time.

Grant tells us in his history of Greenland that there were about one hundred hamlets on these coasts. The colonies on the east coast have disappeared. Some ruins have been found, but where are the people? Nothing has been heard definitely from them since 1408, when the east Greenland trade ceased. Some think that black death destroyed them, others say that polar ice, coming down, closed the coast from intercourse with the parent country, so that they starved. According to one Kojake, who has written on the subject, they became eaters of human flesh, owing to a famine, but afterwards they are said to have relished it. That they were nice about it is evident when we read that they only consumed old people, forsaken orphans and unnecessary persons. A rumor reached Norway in 1718 about a vessel having been wrecked off the coast of Greenland and of the crew having been eaten voraciously by savages. The word voracious suggests relish, and possibly these savages were descendants from the good, old Norwegian stock,

who ate unnecessary persons only a few hundred years before and who had a bishop in 1121.

May 17th. Saturday. We expected to sight the land, so were on the lookout. The weather was cloudy and there was a southeast breeze, so everything was set and drawing. The clouds lifted about noon and in the distance the snow-covered mountains of Greenland could be seen. At first it was difficult to tell which was mountain and which cloud. By and by, however, the forbidding coast grew distinct.

Our objective point was Holstenborg and the mate was in the crow's-nest examining the shore for the Danish colors. Some small bergs were scattered over the water and a narrow shore floe was fast to the coast.

To the north of us the Knights Reefs ran far out to sea and on these some larger bergs had grounded. The ship was slowed down and all her canvas stowed. Finally the engines were stopped, and after a little while, the captain ordered the ship put about as he could not pick up the settlement. I heard the order given and was greatly disappointed as I longed to see an Eskimo.

Just then the mate called out that he saw a kayak coming off, so the ship lay to and waited. I repaired to the fore top and presently saw two kayaks coming toward us. There was quite a splash on, but the sun had now come out and the scene interested me intensely.

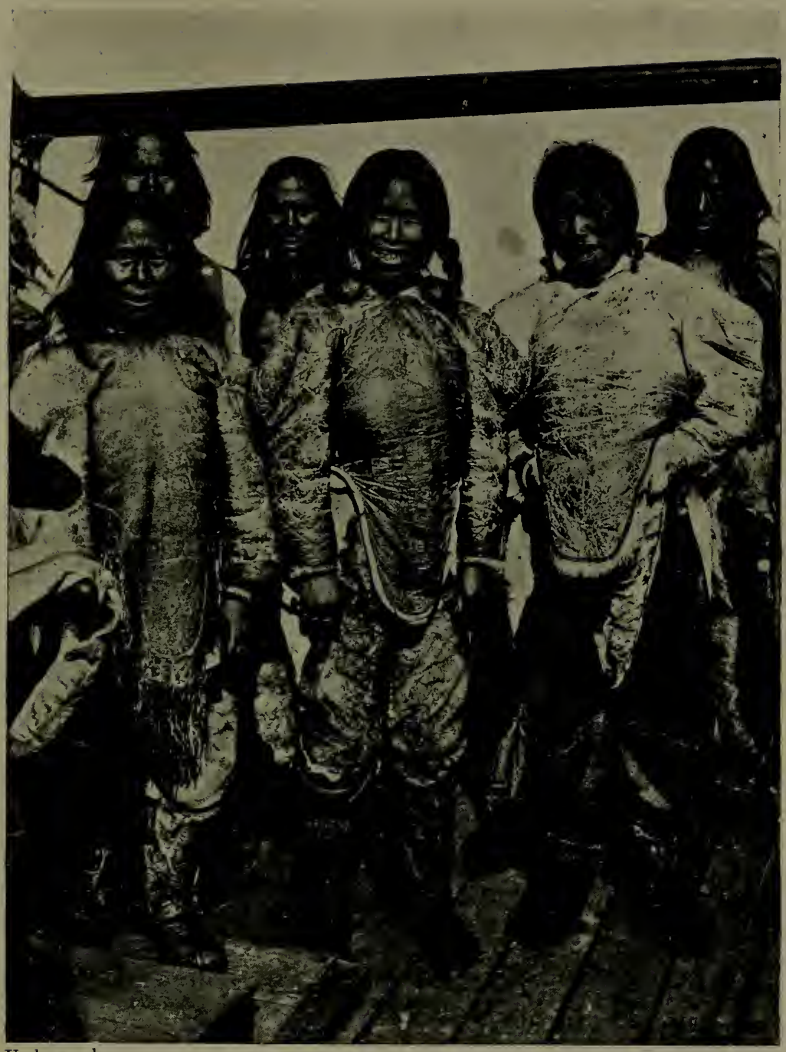
The little boats were almost submerged and the occupants were wet and glistened in the sunlight.

When they came alongside, I saw that the kayaks were about 15 feet long, with little knobs of ivory decorating bow and stern, and were about 18 inches wide at the widest part and covered with skin.

One Eskimo sat in each. The edge of the hole in which he sat was raised a couple of inches and over this he had pulled his skin coat, wrapped a lash around it and made it water-tight. The paddle was trimmed with ivory and the dusky faces of the almond-eyed navigators were all smiles as they looked at us and showed their white teeth. A whale boat was lowered and each canoe lifted in, Eskimo and all, then they left their boats, shook hands with every one around and went on to the bridge, where they remained until the ship was at anchor off the village.

Holstenborg consisted of a church, which was also a schoolhouse, a shop where the deputy governor lived, and the governor's house. There were a number of native houses—awful places, built of turf. A long low passage led to the door of each. As the weather was comparatively warm, this passage was generally very wet, and when the door of the house opened, the smell was overpowering. Inside sat women at work with their needles, or dressing skins. When the ship came to anchor off the shore floe, a boat-load of ladies came on board. A Greenland belle was a well dressed person. Her hair was folded several times and then wound about with a ribbon, so that it stood up upon the top of the head; the fold

of the hair above the ribbon was rather fan-shaped, and the color of the ribbon indicated whether the lady was married, single, or a widow. Possibly there were degrees of wrapping, and shades of the color, indicating the number of times she had been married, and the depths of despair into which her various bereavements had reduced her. This simple record of her past was an excellent arrangement in a country where there were no society papers, — a sort of personal totem carried on the head, so that he or she who ran might read. Of course, in lower latitudes, where high civilization and divorce courts exist, shortness of hair would render some records so incomplete that the Greenland method is never likely to supplant the present ready references to be found amongst interested and observing neighbors. A bodice was worn, made of some cheerful colored stuff procured at the shop or from whalers. Tight fitting trousers, made of bay seal skin and extending down to the knees, came next, and very gaudy boots of colored skin. Down the front of each leg of the trousers was a stripe 1½ inches wide, of colored skin, and the boots, especially around the tops, were very ornate. Many of the girls were good-looking, and on their arrival a ball commenced in the 'tween-decks which lasted while they were there; fiddles and concertinas supplying the music. These instruments were played by whalers and Eskimos equally well, and they knew the same airs. Most of our visitors had articles to barter and they wanted bread



Underwood.

Cape York Esquimaux

in return more than anything else, but accepted colored handkerchiefs and other trifles.

Slippers and tobacco pouches were their principal stock in trade, but there were some down quilts, prettily bordered with the green necks of the eider duck. Captain Fairweather and myself spent a pleasant evening with the governor and his deputy, and it was interesting to hear the music of civilization played on a piano by the wife of the latter.

Coming away, they gave us a lot of quaint ivories made by the natives, from walrus tusks, such as brooches, pipes, paper knives, etc., etc.

May 18th. Sunday. I went on shore early, and seeing a lot of snow buntings, spent some time looking for their nests, but without result. On the sunny sides of the rocks the snow had gone; there was some dead grass, but indeed the country was, for the most part, covered with it. There were several pairs of ravens about, but I could not find their nests, so I borrowed a pair of skies, and ascending a hill close by, enjoyed the exhilarating sport of sliding down its snowy slope. During the afternoon I made a house-to-house visitation in the native quarter and saw much of interest. The older portion of the population I found at home, but the youth and beauty of the place had gone on board the *Aurora*. About dinner time I came on board and acquired a further collection of Eskimo ware, including ladies' clothing, for which even my bed curtains were bartered. It was late when I retired for the

night, surfeited with the pleasure of my first long day in Greenland.

May 19th. Monday. I wrote letters home this morning and sent them on shore. During the summer they arrived via Copenhagen, having gone by the Danish mail ship which visited the settlement every year.

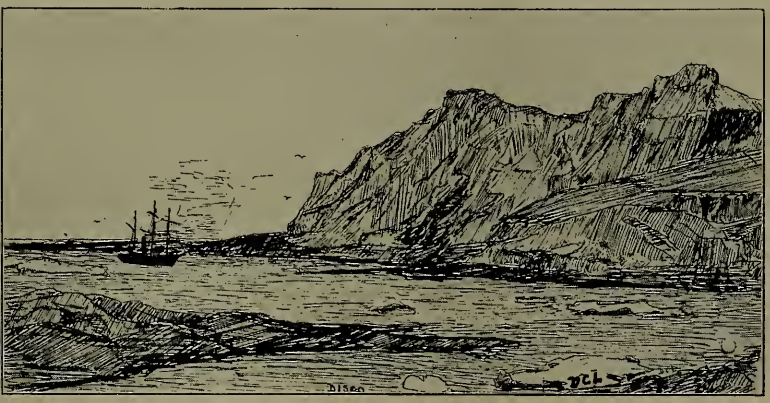
By breakfast time we were under way. It was a beautiful day. There was a breeze from the southwest, so the ship soon had all her canvas set and we stood away, clear of the land.

The Knights Reef, running out to sea north of Holstenborg, had to be weathered. On the heavy ice around there, we saw a number of walrus, but did not disturb them. By noon we were sailing up the coast amid floe ice, so the canvas was taken off and we steamed slowly through it. A sharp lookout was kept for whales, as we were then on a very good ground for spring fishing, sixty miles from Disco and sixty miles from Riffkol being the neighborhood where the ships in olden times killed fine cargoes.

> "With Riffkol hill and Disco Dipping,
> There you will find the whale fish skipping,"

is an old saying amongst whalers.

Esquimaux Kyaks



Disco

CHAPTER X

POLAR BEAR SHOOTING

"The shapeless bear
With dangling ice, all horrid, stalks forlorn,
Slow paced, and sourer as the storms increase,
He makes his bed beneath the inclement drift,
And with stern patience, scorning weak complaint,
Hardens his heart against the assailing want."

May 20th. Tuesday. We were quite close to Disco in the morning. However, the Captain decided not to go into the settlement, Godhaven, where many other ships lay, but to go west, as the straits appeared tolerably free from ice in that direction. Accordingly, about noon, we turned our bows westward, having a solid looking floe to the north of us and open water to the south. This was all good fishing ground and we might have picked up a big whale, but we did not see a single spout while we were in the neighborhood.

Birds were getting numerous, now that we were amongst the ice, and the edge of the floe was lined with little auks in some places. They were important-looking fellows, like diminutive penguins.

Disco looked wild and forbidding as we steamed away from it, with snow lodged in all the sheltered places.

The island rose to a height of about three thousand feet and much of the coast on the west side of it was precipitous and exposed, so that there were always bare rock faces, which gave a patchy appearance to that place.

To the north of us, many big bergs could be seen, which had come originally from Waggate Straits. Two tremendous ones were at one time aground in this place, in very deep water. They were described by Crants, who tells us that they were there for years.

We had steamed for some distance to the west, along the floe edge, when the lookout called down that he saw a bear on an island of ice, a few points on our starboard bow. I heard him, so immediately went for my rifle. A boat was lowered and we rowed to the island. George Matheson, one of our harpooners, and myself immediately landed, and the boat left us, intending to row around the island so as to intercept bruin, should he attempt to swim to the main floe.

As this was the first wild bear I had ever seen, I was unfamiliar with their ways, but learned afterwards that unless the hunter came suddenly upon one, or unless it had cubs, it would almost invariably retreat and probably take to the water. Of course, it might not know the whereabouts of the hunter, and in that case it would be as liable to go in his direction as any other.

This particular animal was an exception to all rules; for before we had gone very far we found that he was coming straight toward us. Owing

George Matheson

to the nature of the ice, he could not always be seen, but occasionally he would stand up and take his bearings, when we could see each other. I was an active youth, George was a heavy man in excellent condition, and if it came to running, he would have had no chance with me, and no sensible bear would pass him to pursue me. Realizing these things, I had no misgivings, so knelt down and put out a box of ten cartridges. The harpooner, seeing my preparations, said: "For God's sake, don't shoot." He had had experiences with wounded bears before, which he did not wish to repeat. It seemed to me, however, that, between the two of us, we had things our own way as we had had such splendid practice at seals a short time before and our hands were in, so, when bruin stood up to have a look at us, less than a hundred yards away, I fired and hit him in the head.

I was intensely pleased as it was my first bear and also the first seen that year by any of the ships.

We had, as spectators, the entire crew, as the ship was not far away and every one on board was watching. A bear is considered lucky, considerable trouble being taken to pick one up. As they looked very yellow in the white ice, they were easily seen. Curiosity, no doubt, drew this one to us, as we were kneeling down and not moving when he stood up to look. Had we moved, he would probably have gone away. I kept the skull, the entire occipital portion of which was shattered, although the skin wound was small, as

the copper-nosed bullets only expanded well on striking something hard.

The boat came back for us and, after skinning the prize, we went on board. As there was much heavy ice to the west, we steamed back towards Disco, and a lead, opening to the north, later in the day, gave us a chance of going a few miles in the right direction.

May 21st. Wednesday. We had come rather close to the land by morning and were off Disco Fiord. There was very heavy ice coming down and numbers of bergs about, so navigation was exceedingly difficult and dangerous, and we made little or no progress until noon, when the ice slackened and let us go ahead, the wind blowing from the north and loosening it. In the evening it was very cold, with snow squalls.

I got an ivory gull this day (P. Eburnea) and also a glaucous gull (Larus Glaucus). The ivory gull positively looked like ivory as it stood on the ice, and the glaucous gull, with its great spread of snow-white wings, was beautiful.

We were sorry that the ship did not stop at Godhaven, or Lieveley, as it was generally called, because of its importance as a point of departure for expeditions. They generally obtained dogs there, and whalers, for a century and more, had made it a port to call, but this was a race for the north and no time was to be wasted. We managed to work on our course all afternoon and during the night, as the wind had slackened the ice.

May 22nd. Thursday. During the night, the

Valentine.

Little Auk

ship had made considerable progress, so at noon we were off Hare Island. After tea, we were hooked on in a pool of water for several hours. I took my gun and went out for a stroll, killing a number of little auks (Alca Alle or Roach) and a Richardson's skua. These latter were called, by the sailors, boatswain birds, because of the long feathers in the tail, resembling a marlinspike.

As at this time we had the sun night and day, it made me exceedingly restless. About ten P. M. we were fast again, so, taking my gun, I shot some black guillemot (U. Grylle), these birds being very numerous. I returned to the ship about midnight, when it was blowing rather hard.

May 23rd. Friday. The wind had died down by morning and the day was beautiful. We were off Nugsuak Peninsula. There were many tremendous bergs about and the floe was heavy. In the dim distance we saw a ship and made our way towards her. To the east of us was the entrance to Umanak Fiord, one of the largest on the west coast of Greenland. From where we were, all fiords looked alike, and it was impossible to tell islands from mainland. It resembled a sea of ice out of which protruded rocks and hills, which, excepting on the steep places, were covered with snow.

Black guillemot and little auks were everywhere in thousands, and it was pretty to see rows of the latter along the ice edge. They stood shoulder to shoulder, facing the water, and were very indifferent to our presence.

By night we had made little progress and the new ship was still far away. We had been about with the whalers enough by this time to recognize any of them a long way off by their rigging, smoke or funnel, so, long before we reached this new vessel, we recognized that she was a stranger, and she turned out to be the *Cornwallis*. When we left Dundee, she was outfitting for the Greenland fishing, that is, for the voyage we ourselves originally intended taking, after leaving Newfoundland.

The high price of whalebone, however, had induced her owners to send her to Davis Straits instead. By tea time we were hooked on within a quarter of a mile of her, and after that meal the Captain sent me on board to see whether there was any mail for our ship. Climbing on board, I was amazed to find my friend Armitage there, with a yellow beard and sea boots; I would not have recognized him. He was greatly surprised to see me because he believed that I had gone from Newfoundland to the Jan Mayen fishing, not knowing of our altered arrangements. The *Cornwallis* was an old barque, formerly in the South American trade. She had had engines put in, and been fortified for Arctic ice. After I sailed from Dundee, Armitage, in going around the docks, saw her. He went on board and, finding Captain Nicol, arranged to sail with him later in the year.

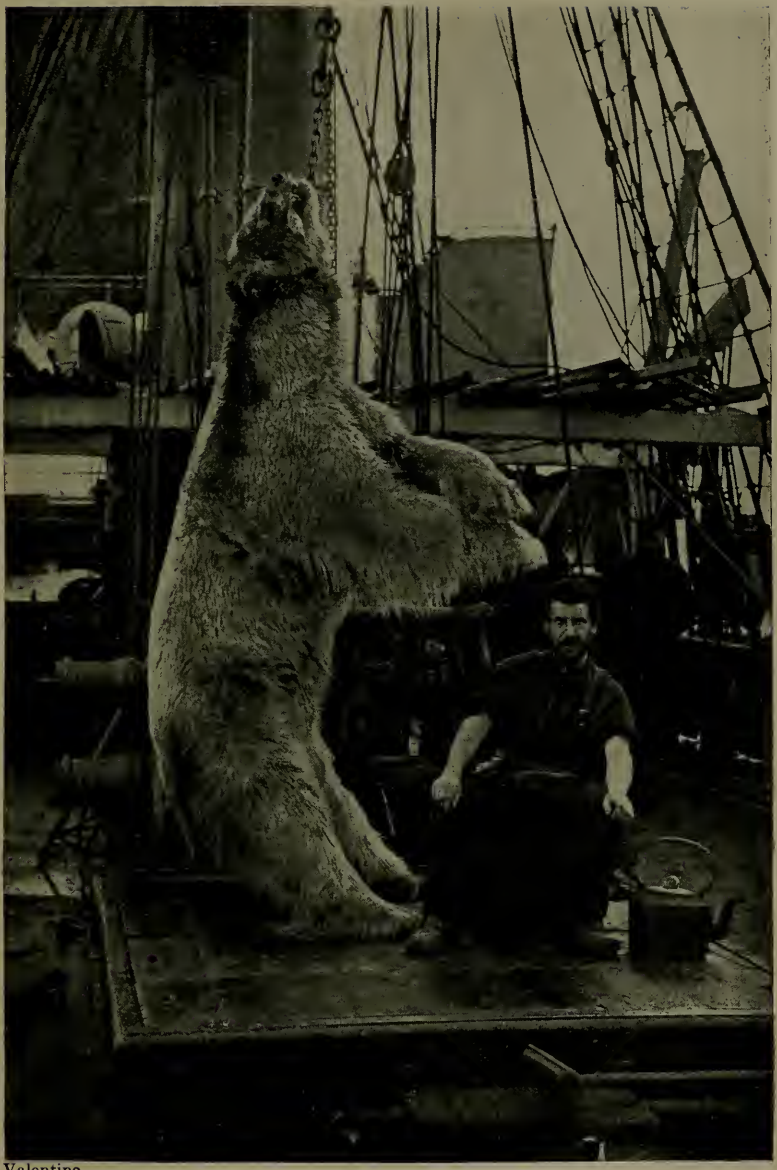
Sending back to the *Aurora* mail and papers, also some fresh mutton, which had been sent out to us, I remained on the *Cornwallis* and heard

the news. I saw her peculiar and useless engines. Captain Nicol said they spoilt her for sailing and she steamed badly.

May 24th. Saturday. It was a beautiful Arctic day when I came on deck before breakfast. Ahead of us, the world was white, not a break to be seen anywhere, astern some open water. The *Cornwallis* was lying on our port side a few hundred yards away, so that about eleven I went on board, and, with Armitage, started off to look for something to shoot, among the hummocks, three or four miles north of where we lay. We spent hours tramping over the ice, but did not see a track, so we returned to our ships about six P. M. This hummock belt extended east and west and had been caused by the rafting of great floes. It was quite smooth from the ship to the hummocks and also on the other side of them. Half a mile beyond the ridge, however, there was a great berg which appeared to be aground.

When I returned on board the *Aurora*, the Captain told me to go below and have my tea and then to go with the mate back to where I had been, because he had seen a bear close to us all the time we were there. It certainly was curious that neither of us had seen him or his tracks. When we were about a mile away from the ships, I saw Armitage hurrying after us. I was anxious to wait for him, but the mate insisted on pushing on, as it would be a fearfully unlucky thing for a member of another crew to shoot a bear first seen by us. After a little, we reached a crack in the

ice, about two feet wide, so we stepped across and hurried on. Armitage, coming up shortly after, was unable to cross as the crack was then eight or ten feet wide and extended indefinitely in each direction. So the situation righted itself, and my friend returned to the ship while the mate and I kept on to where the bear had been seen and there we found tracks in abundance, but no bear. After an hour's searching, we were returning to the ship when we saw her jib hauled up as a signal for us to go ahead again, the game having been spotted by the lookout in the crow's nest. Returning to the hummocks, we saw the bear strolling from behind the berg beyond. He was coming straight towards us, so we got down behind the rafted ice and awaited his approach. It was decided that I should have the first shot as the mate had killed so many. I allowed the bear to get about a hundred and fifty yards away before firing, and then put a bullet into him. I don't know where it hit, but he came down, to be up again at once and to keep on coming. The mate fired and down he went again, and we kept it up until the bear was hit many times. Sometimes he fell, sometimes he bit at the place, and by the time he reached the ridge he was very lame and badly shot up. He had gone some distance to the west of us, so I stood up on a slab of ice and finished him, as we thought, by putting a bullet in his shoulder and dropping him in his tracks. We hurried up our side of the ridge until we arrived at where he was. Then, climbing over, I was sur-



Valentine.

Polar Bear

prised to find him sitting up. This time my bullet finished him. Our shooting was nothing to be proud of, and went to show how careful one should be with bears, because if not hit right, they take a lot of lead. This was about the only one of those killed that took more than one or, at the most, two shots. As neither of us had a hunting knife, we had a long job skinning him with pocket knives. Then we started for the ship, towing the skin, but when we reached the crack in the ice, it had opened about twenty-five yards, so we were fairly caught. The mate, with his usual ingenuity, loosened a pan of ice, and on this we crossed, using the butts of our rifles as paddles. Arriving at the other side, we were met by two sailors, sent from the ship, as we were being watched from the barrel, and they took the bear skin in charge while we made our way on board. As it was late, we retired as soon as we had had something to eat.

May 25th. Sunday. In the morning, Armitage came on board and saw the bear skin. He had never seen a polar bear on the ice, so was very much disappointed that he had not been with us.

Both ships unhooked about ten A. M. and stood north through a lead. We moved along fairly well and by evening were hooked on close to each other in a hole of water with a good ice edge.

The *Bear* and *Triune* were now in sight, the latter having come from Dundee direct. We were off Svartin Huk, a great peninsula, but I only knew this by consulting the chart glued to the cabin table.

The *Cornwallis* was the "lame duck" of the fleet. Steaming in open water, she had not more than half our speed, and in heavy ice she could do little, as her power was so weak. Of course, she could wriggle her way around floes and along tortuous leads fairly well, especially if some of the better ships had just been through ahead of her and broken the trail. The *Cornwallis* was the only one of the ships coming direct from Dundee which carried a surgeon, but there were three on the Newfoundland fleet.

May 26th. Monday. We both moved a few miles north this day, but the ice was very heavy and the conditions for advance unfavorable. Some distance astern, we saw the *Bear*, but she was not making much headway and we all three were tied up by noon.

A ship, when anchored to a floe, has her bows against it and a cable out to an ice anchor on one bow or on both, according to the weather. From the jib-boom a rope ladder always hangs, so that one can easily get on to or leave the floe. There is generally a man on the ladder when the ship approaches the ice, and as she touches, he drops off and, with an ice drill, makes a hold for the ice anchor.

Bringing Armitage, we went to a crack up which looms were flying, and had a pleasant afternoon shooting them. They were fast-flying birds, and the knowledge of the fact that they would not be wasted gave zest to our sport. Shooting guillemot rising off the water would not be much

fun, but picking off single birds as they passed was good practice.

The looms we saw in such thousands were, I believe, Uria Brunichii.

The ships were tied up when I turned in.

May 27th. Tuesday. The ice was slack, so we kept in a northerly direction, making good headway. We left the *Cornwallis* and, following a good lead, passed the *Narwhal*, which had been the leading ship for some days.

During the evening, the *Bear* came after us, but we were able to keep ahead. Captain Fairweather decided to give Upernivik a wide berth, as he once had had an unpleasant experience with the rocks of that charming Greenland summer resort, so we kept going north all night.

There was a wonderful amount of life on board a whaler, on account of the crew being so large. In the 'tween-decks, one generally found a number of men at work, picking oakum, spinning rope yarn, or other yarns, and weaving sennet. The carpenter and his assistant were found at work in one place, the cooper busy in another, while the sailmaker sat and sewed. On the deck, in some sheltered corner, one found the blacksmith at work, and there were always jobs being done in the engine room. But it was easy work, none of the dog's life one saw on other ships.

There are said to be runic monuments in the vicinity of Upernivik, and one on Woman's Island is said to bear the date of 1135. The early travellers, who are supposed to be responsible for

these records, are also said to have visited Lancaster Sound.

When one considers that Baffin circumnavigated the bay which bears his name, in 1616, in a craft of fifty-five tons, and when one examines a Viking ship of a thousand years ago and finds it a substantial clinker built boat, a hundred feet long with fine beam, one sees no reason why a twelfth century vessel could not make her way to Lancaster Sound.

May 28th. Wednesday. We had a day racing with the *Bear*. She managed to pass us just before we reached Browns Island, and hooked on to the floe some distance from us. After a little, the *Narwhal* joined us, and later the *Cornwallis*. Armitage and I went off in our dingey and had a few pleasant hours shooting looms. We shot a lot of them, which were divided between the two ships. It took me some time to overcome a prejudice and to become accustomed to seeing looms on the table in any shape or form, but they were really much better than any ducks we killed, because they were not at all fishy and our cook understood about skinning them. They tasted rather like roast hare.

During the afternoon, the weather was thick and it was snowing. The coast of Greenland, at this point, was fringed by hundreds of islands of all sizes and shapes. They were everywhere and some had names while others had not. One navigated there by rule of thumb, only moving when landmarks could be seen, and avoiding visible

Valentine.

Following Leads

dangers. Occasionally, something one did not see, destroyed the ship, as there were hundreds of uncharted rocks. In approaching a settlement, a native generally came on board and pointed out the way, but the coast was a dangerous one and the ships only kept close to it in order that they might avoid the terrible middle pack.

May 29th. Thursday. We were bumping along towards the west when I came on deck, as the ice looked slacker in that direction, but we had to return shortly after breakfast and, after thrashing around for most of the morning, we managed to strike a good lead and gain a few miles. There was no shooting, as the ship did not stop.

The *Cornwallis* kept near us all day, and the *Narwhal* was not far away. As we were now on the edge of the notorious Melville Bay, it became interesting. Greely's famous thirty-six hour passage was not going to be repeated by us, that was evident. I recalled Cheynes' account of its dangers, but we were so comfortable on board the *Aurora*, and meals were served with such regularity, that it was only possible to realize the danger by watching floes crunch into each other as they were pressed together by irresistible forces. We hooked on at night with little in sight but floes and bergs.

It is a wonderful thing to see a berg ploughing its way through a frozen sea, slowly but surely, overcoming all obstacles, provided, always, that the water was deep enough to keep its mighty base from grounding. On this day there were

dozens in sight. They were in every direction and one could easily understand the hopelessness of a sailing ship's position, beset in these waters, with a gale driving bergs down upon her.

May 30th. Friday. We were lying, hooked on to the floe, in the forenoon, when I looked over the side and saw a beautiful male King eider duck (S. Spectabilis) sitting on the water within ten feet of the Captain's port. The Captain was in bed, as he had been in the crow's nest for days, nearly all the time. His port was open and I did not want to wake him, so, taking a gun, I went on the ice and, firing from there, killed the bird without the report being heard in the cabin, and the dog, Jock, went out and brought the bird in. It was the first King eider I had shot and it looked beautiful in its spring plumage. The striking thing about the bird was the enormous frontal processes bulging high above the bill and brightly colored. These were soft and shrank rapidly as they dried, losing their color. The plumage was a mixture of black, white, pearl gray and sea green, making a gorgeous whole. The first bird one sees of a beautiful species always excites more admiration than the others, and so I was delighted with this and carefully skinned it.

The evening made no change in the conditions and we remained fast all night.

May 31st. Saturday. All the ships were stuck in the morning. The *Cornwallis* and *Narwhal* were some distance astern, the *Arctic* near the shore, the *Nova Zembla* and *Polynia* close to-

Polynia

gether to the west of us. There were an immense number of bergs, some of them, no doubt, aground, as there were many islands and rocks. We were lying off Tassuisak, a not very populous place, and I was in hope that some natives, seeing the ships, would come off.

During the afternoon, we got under way and poked about without moving much further north. When we were crossing any open places, the ship steamed very slowly and a man was kept forward, on the lookout for submerged rocks.

CHAPTER XI

MELVILLE BAY

"And hark! The lengthening roar continuous runs
Athwart the rifted deep, at once it bursts
And piles a thousand mountains to the clouds."

June 1st. Sunday. Owing to a change of wind the ice had loosened and during the night we managed to push on to Berry Island. The *Bear* and *Thetis* appeared upon the scene during the afternoon, and we saw the *Bear* strike a sunken rock. We hooked on to the small island with several of the other ships, the *Bear* being on our starboard side, and the *Narwhal*, *Arctic* and *Thetis* on the port. I saw Commander Schley going on board the *Bear* and examining her with a water telescope. His boat passed very close to our quarter and the Captain spoke to him as he went.

The ships were all lying close to the shore floe with this low island in front of them, and it looked as if they might be there some time, so I went on shore with the surgeon of the *Arctic*. There was a camera sitting on the ice near the *Thetis*, so the ships were evidently being photographed. We wandered about the inhospitable place for a time and came on board. The perpetual daylight made me very irregular in my movements, coming and going at all hours; my day was regulated by my

meals. Those who had watches to keep slept and got up with their usual regularity.

June 2nd. Monday. The day fine, and we were still tied up at the island. I took a gun and went on shore after breakfast, but there was not much to shoot. In a little valley I saw a quantity of dead grass sticking out of the ice. On going over and examining, I found a number of *human skeletons.* Wherever there was a big bunch of grass, there I found an ice-covered skeleton. Probably they were Eskimos. When I returned to the ship there were a number of natives on board. They came from Tassuisak and had some seal skins to trade.

Some of our men had visited the *Arctic.* She had been in Godhaven, so had much trade and our men procured some of it. Afterwards I bought a kayak model from one of these. It was very beautifully made. The skin tobacco pouches and slippers made by natives in Godhaven looked nicer than any I saw from other settlements.

The southern Greenland towns were better than those further north, but the whalers seldom called at any further south than Holstenborg. I went on board the *Bear* for awhile during the evening with Dr. Crawford and met Lieutenant Emory. During the day I saw several very beautiful glaucous gulls. They are called burgomasters by the sailors.

June 3rd. Tuesday. Immediately to the north of where we lay there were a great many icebergs. They presented a very fine appearance with the

sun shining on them. The *Thetis* and *Bear* started off amongst these bergs. We tried to move out to the west, but did not accomplish much; for when evening came we were no further north than when we started. In the distance and to the west of us we saw a berg on the top of which there was a black spot. What could it be? From the crow's nest the telescope revealed nothing but a black spot on the icy slope.

There was a narrow lead going in this direction, so the mate and myself went with a boat's crew to solve the mystery. We were able to take a whale boat a long distance through the lead, and then we walked the rest of the way. I had brought a rifle in case there should be a chance of a shot. On getting up to the berg we found that it was not fast, but that owing to its great depth in the water it had a motion independent of its floe. On one side there had been a great slide, and up this we proposed going.

Just at this place the motion of the berg had ground up a lot of ice at its base, and also some of the floe, so that one had very unstable footing to jump to and from in crossing the surrounding fissure.

However, we all managed without mishap and ascended the slide to within six or eight feet of the top. I was then pushed up this little cliff and found that, with the exception of the place we had come up, the sides were sheer precipices. It was necessary to traverse a snowy undulation before the black object came into view. The mate joined

me with some of the others and it was exciting for a few minutes, but disappointing when we found only a big black stone which the berg had picked up probably during its glacial days.

The islands of ice often turn over owing to the frost splitting them when the weather is cold. This frequent alteration of their centre of gravity makes them very undesirable neighbors, especially in the autumn. While it was disappointing finding only a stone when we expected something wonderful, yet the view from the summit was magnificent.

Immediately around little but ice could be seen, with here and there some black threads of water and many great bergs scattered about.

In the distance the coast of Greenland looked bold. It had been rather high all the way up from Upernivik, but Cape Shackleton, rising to a height of thirteen hundred feet, looked very imposing, being precipitous. There was a great loomery on its cliffs, which was probably the home of the thousands of those birds which we saw every day flying along the cracks, or about the pools of open water. There was much less trouble getting down the berg than getting up, but we were all tired when we reached the ship as we were not accustomed to long walks.

June 4th. Wednesday. The morning was fine, and many ships were in sight. During the night we had passed Cape Shackleton. To the south we saw the *Thetis*, evidently in the rips off Horse Heade, with the *Bear* astern of her. The *Nova*

Zembla and *Triune* were several miles to the west, and caught in the pack, while all the other ships were together. During the morning the *Thetis*, *Bear* and *Polynia* came up and joined us in our feeble attempt to push along.

Later in the day the weather turned cold and cloudy, but no storm came, and the ice was very tight at bedtime.

June 5th. Thursday. A beautiful day with sunshine and blue sky. Nearly all the ships were anchored to the ice or stuck in our immediate vicinity. We were hooked on in a large lake and close to us there were a number of great bergs. During the morning I took the dingey and rowed amongst them, as there was no floe ice near.

The silence was very impressive, the only sound being that made by the splashing of water as it trickled down the icy sides of the bergs, or the cry of some seabird. I traced the base of one of these hoary giants a long way into the depths, but the water of the Arctic sea is by no means clear, owing to the vast numbers of animalculae which inhabit it.

I shot a big bag of little auks here, but was careful not to do any shooting whilst close to the bergs, as the concussion might have brought down ice. During the afternoon the floe opened a little, and the expedition ships came close to us, but the *Nova Zembla* and *Triune* still appeared to be held in the pack. We all watched like hawks for a chance to reach the Duck Islands, now only a few miles ahead. Greely might have been there.

Valentine.

Hooked on to the Shore Floe

June 6th. Friday. This was one of the most exciting days we had—eight of us all on edge and each trying to get ahead of his neighbor. This friendly rivalry added zest to the trip. We were quite close to the Duck Islands, which made the starting point of the Melville Bay passage.

The day was glorious and we spent most of it fast to a floe. The exciting thing was when late in the evening a crack occurred near the *Arctic*. It was not more than a mile or two across the floe to the open water at the Duck Islands, and this crack appeared to extend the whole way. When it was wide enough the *Arctic* and *Aurora* immediately entered, but before we had gone any distance, the ice closed astern of us, preventing any of the others entering. For a short time we were caught, and it looked like the nips, then the floe seemed to swing, closing behind us and opening in front, so that we steamed away with a cheer, leaving the others barred out. The *Bear*, after a short time, succeeded in breaking a way for herself and the *Thetis*, and all the rest followed like ducks.

I was aloft for a time watching this game of follow the leader and keenly interested in this Arctic race. We entered the patch of open water about midnight, and steaming across made fast to the ice at the islands.

June 7th. Saturday. It was wonderful how little we slept when there was excitement. I enjoyed it so much that I was afraid of missing anything by going below, but after the race we

had just finished, as we had all hooked on, I felt that it was safe to turn in as there was nothing but dense pack ahead. The *Arctic* and *Aurora* were lying very close to the *Bear*, and the *Thetis* was not far off. We were on the west side of the Middle Duck, the rest of the fleet being on the other side. It was evident that there were no explorers here to be rescued, for the approach of the fleet was rather imposing and they would have seen it.

After a rest, taking a gun I made my way on shore. We were too early for eggs, but there were plenty of ducks and the shooting was rather good. Numbers of phalarope (Lobipes Hyperboreus) were about. They were graceful little birds and no doubt bred here later. Coming back for the dingey I rowed out to a point of ice past which there was a flight of ducks, but was astonished to find the birds so shy in such a quiet place. Perhaps the sight of the ships invading this sanctuary made them a little nervous. I managed, however, to add considerably to my bag. There did not appear to be any loosening of the ice, so none of the ships made any effort to move. I went on board the *Arctic* during the afternoon and received a supply of apples from Captain Guy. The surgeon returned with me and spent the evening on the *Aurora*. As our boiler required some repair this was attended to during the day and it made a wonderful difference to the temperature of the cabin having no heat in the engine room for a few hours.

June 8th. Sunday. A peaceful day and perfectly calm with some fog. All the ships were hooked on to the floe. Crawford of the *Arctic* came on board and we took our dingey and went to one of the islands. Some men from the relief ships were there. They were shooting with eight bores, the first time I had ever seen guns of that calibre; I saw them make some long shots. We secured a few ducks, eider and long tailed.

During the afternoon we went on board the *Bear*, and again met Lieutenant Emory and his officers. Lieutenant Colwell showed us the ship. The arrangement of the berths in the cabin was splendid; they were curtained off by drawing out poles, and by pushing these in the sleeping quarters were reduced in size, and the saloon enlarged.

I should say that the *Bear* was the fastest ship of the fleet, except, perhaps, the *Arctic*, which had powerful engines. The only thing against the *Arctic* was her great length which made it difficult to turn her about in small water holes, and to manœuvre amongst the ice as some of the others were able to do.

The *Wolf* and *Narwhal* had moved off and were caught in the pack by bedtime.

We were then on the threshold of Melville Bay, the reputation of which was most unsavory.

Perhaps the most interesting occurrence there during historic times was the loss of nineteen ships and a total of £140,000 damage to the fleet on June 19th, 1830. This event has been called the Baffin's Bay Fair, because the one thousand

men who suddenly found themselves homeless upon the ice, made the best of their circumstances and enjoyed themselves immensely.

Before the ships went down they secured quantities of liquor and food and afterwards established comfortable camps. There was an abundance of wood from the wrecks, so they made bonfires around which they danced. The curious part of it was that no lives were lost, and that the entire party ultimately reached home safe.

There is an interesting oil painting of this event in the museum at Peterhead.

June 9th. Monday. We seemed permanent fixtures now and felt that we owned the place in spite of the ducks. I took the dingey with a boy and pulled off to a long point of ice on the west side of the island not far from where we lay. We were able to hide behind a heavy piece of ice with the boat and I shot a number of ducks in the handsome plumage of that season. Then landing, found numbers of old nests made of feathers and down. They had been driven into crevices of rock by storms and one could have collected a quantity of down. While on the island I saw and heard my first finner whale. He was making a great noise as he breathed. Finners have little oil and short bone, so they are not pursued. They are also very quick in their movements and consequently dangerous. This one came up several times in different water holes about the islands and then disappeared.

At dinner we were discussing vegetables and

all agreed that the best on board the ship were the tinned carrots. They were simply boiled and put up in pieces six or seven inches long. They were absolutely as fresh and sweet as the day on which they were prepared. We called them Carnoustie carrots, as they had come from that place. Our Dundee meat was excellent at this time. We had a good supply of it, and very seldom saw salt beef or salt pork on the cabin table during the voyage.

The steak for breakfast was served on a sort of metal basket; a handle crossed the middle of this and on each side there was a lid. The steak was under one lid and fried onions under the other. We also had hot rolls every morning, although ship's bread was always on the table.

June 10th. Tuesday. Early in the morning the *Aurora* unhooked and for a little while managed to push her way northwest. The *Wolf* and *Narwhal* had gained by moving on. There was always a chance of a lead opening and letting one through. We had reached the Duck Islands first, by taking the lead while the others hesitated. We now entered the pack further than we wished to and then spent some time trying to extricate ourselves.

There was always danger of being beset in the pack and carried down the straits again; in it there was no safe anchorage, as it might twist and turn in any direction, and a low temperature might even freeze the ship up, whereas following the shore floe gave one a lead of open water every time the pack floated off, and should it be driven

in the ship could generally find a bay or indentation in which she was fairly safe.

In consequence of this the captains became nervous when they found themselves beset in the pack. At night we were almost out of sight of the islands. The *Wolf* and *Narwhal* were not far from us.

June 11th. Wednesday. Before morning we managed to work north some distance. The *Wolf*, *Narwhal* and *Arctic* were close to us. The relief ships during the day were joined by the *Triune*, *Cornwallis* and *Nova Zembla.*

We all made some headway, but in the afternoon we were so nearly caught once or twice that we steamed back towards the islands and arrived almost at our old anchorage by the following morning.

June 12th. Thursday. In the morning a lot of us were back at the old anchorage again, but the *Arctic* was still to the north, close to the *Thetis* and *Bear.* The *Wolf* and *Narwhal* were out in the pack to the west of us, but in the afternoon these last joined us. During the day I shot a lot of ducks, all eider and king eider, afterwards landing on a floe from which a peninsula ran out having a narrow isthmus covered with very high hummocks. Crossing this isthmus to the peninsula beyond, I came upon the perfectly fresh footprints of a bear and two cubs, leading from the water to the big hummocks over which I had come and over which my route back lay. Having only a sixteen bore and number four shot. this discov-

A Whaler amongst Ice

ery was disquieting for a time, as a bear with cubs might fight. However, she did not materialize.

All the other ships were closer inshore during the evening, while we moved west a little. During the night we moved off up a lead.

June 13th. Friday. We were hard and fast, the *Cornwallis*, *Triune*, *Esquimaux* and *Narwhal* in sight close inshore. The *Arctic* and *Wolf* out with the expedition ships. They were apparently beset. We lay frozen up all day, with not even a duck to shoot. The Sugarloaf, a high mountain on the Greenland coast, showed up well and made a good landmark.

June 14th. Saturday. The day began with a heavy snow storm, but shortly after breakfast it cleared off. The ice opened to the west, so we steamed in that direction, leaving the fleet of older ships apparently fast inshore, and we did not see any of them again for a long time. We made very little headway at first, but found the ice slack after dinner and managed to push through it.

Later a series of good leads opened up and we worked a long way north. When I turned in, the relief ships with the *Arctic* and *Wolf* were in sight ahead of us.

We passed a curious pillar of rock called the Devil's Thumb; it was a long way off. Every one took off his hat to it as was the custom.

Steering amongst ice was sometimes very dangerous for the man at the wheel, because the ship going astern was liable to bump her rudder

against the ice. This, of course, sent the wheel flying around. We had a man hurt in this way by receiving a blow from the wheel during the afternoon.

June 15th. Sunday. We had good leads all the morning and were never blocked for any length of time. By breakfast time we overtook the *Arctic* and *Wolf* with relief ships. Then we all hooked on to a heavy floe in an open pool of water. Very shortly we were off again, but it looked dangerous, so we tied up. The *Wolf* was the first to be free. She entered a lead and it closed behind her, exactly as it had done with us at the Duck Islands. However, later in the day the pack drew off and we all steamed along the edge of the shore floe, the *Thetis* bringing up the rear. This was an exciting race, and no one turned in while the water remained open. The *Wolf* had the lead, the *Arctic* and *Aurora* being together. Occasionally some of us would diverge a little, but we were in line pretty well all the time.

June 16th. Monday. I turned in when I found the way blocked and all the ships tied up, as everything seemed frozen solid, except the pool in which we lay. Seven bells awoke me to find things as they had been. Captain Fairweather shot a Sabine gull after breakfast and I shot some looms, which were picked out of the water by Jock the dog, who retrieved very well. I went on board the *Wolf* with the Captain, and saw Captain Burnette. During the evening the *Arctic* steamed off and we followed with the *Wolf*, but

the lead closed so we all were caught. The *Aurora* managed to push out into the loose ice in a little while, but the *Wolf* remained and the *Arctic* was fairly in the nips.

The evening was fine and we saw land to the north and dozens of bergs to the east of us. There was a crack running into the floe for two hundred yards close to our ship. It was probably twenty-five yards wide at the entrance. A great many looms flew up this and returned when they found it a blind lead. The dingey was lowered and the Captain and myself had a few hours' shooting and secured a great many. They were tied in bunches and hung upon the chains connecting the quarter davits.

June 17th. Tuesday. All were frozen up. I tried stalking a seal, as there were several in sight, but I could not get near any of them. The *Arctic* was still nipped, the *Wolf* was with us and the relief ships a little way east. During the evening we were all moving around, except the *Arctic.*

We were ahead and the *Wolf* next, the *Bear* bringing up the rear. Later the *Thetis* fell back, for she could not keep up. Cape York was in sight and all four of us were rather close together.

With the *Aurora* leading, we kept this up all night, every one greatly excited. In the small hours we were all up to a barrier. Among the Arctic ice it would have been useless to roll the ship as we had done at Newfoundland, the young

ice on that coast being very different from the Arctic floe met with in Melville Bay.

June 18th. Wednesday. The race for Cape York and the north was far too exciting to permit of sleep, so for the following few days I never undressed, but kept going up and down all the time. If we stuck I lay down, and when the engine started I went up.

At one A. M. we were with the *Wolf* and relief ships, pounding away at the floe which separated us from the open water at Cape York. The *Aurora* was the first to break through, when we all gave a great cheer and shouted, "The north water!" I immediately went forward, and sitting on the jib-boom, realized that I was the nearest white man to Greely, possibly the nearest to the pole. I sat there for a long time as we were steaming fast towards the land through open water.

As we neared the shore the *Bear* passed us. She was a faster ship and she reached the shore floe some minutes before us.

Seeing a party land on the ice from the *Bear*, we turned off southwest. As the *Thetis* and *Wolf* were coming up, the Captain went on board the former and bade the commander good-by, and good luck, then we crept off to the southwest with the *Wolf*. The *Bear* having spoken the *Thetis*, steamed west after us, the weather being rather thick.

Finding the ice heavy to the west, we tried a lead to the north, but were beset for some time.

Valentine.

Pounding away at the Floe

The fog was so thick that nothing could be seen ahead. We saw nothing further of the *Thetis* as she remained at Cape York to pick up the party landed by the *Bear*.

I turned in for a time during the night, as the ship was beset by heavy ice. We had now completed the passage of Melville Bay without accident and nearly every one on board felt that the greatest danger of the voyage was over, so we would work our way to the west and look for whales. In the race from St. John's to Cape York we had been beaten by the *Bear* only, and that by just a few minutes. The *Arctic*, *Thetis* and *Wolf* were all close, but in the last lap the *Aurora* and *Bear* were neck and neck almost to the winning post.

CHAPTER XII

CAPE YORK TO CAREY ISLANDS

"And now there came both mist and snow
And it grew wondrous cold,
And ice, mast-high, came floating by
As green as emerald."

I noticed a rather curious phenomenon while coming up the Greenland coast, but thinking that there was probably some simple explanation, made no note of it. One evening while in the passage at the foot of the stairs I heard a peculiar whistling. It was like the noise one sometimes hears when standing beside a telegraph pole. The steward was in the pantry and I drew his attention to it. The sound was very distinct in the pantry, and not noticeable in the saloon, which was on the same deck but a little further aft. The steward said he had heard it before and we concluded it was due to a vibration of the taut rigging conducted down the mizzenmast to this particular place. The engine was silent at the time, otherwise the noise of machinery would have drowned everything else.

I listened to the peculiar whistle several times after and always heard it very distinctly in the pantry. The steward had sailed Arctic waters for years, but he made no comment on this sub-

ject and never mentioned having heard it on other ships, nor did any one else on board the *Aurora* speak of it at all; in fact, we were probably the only two who noticed it.

Years after I came across the following passage in "Old Whaling Days," by Captain Barron:

"From latitude 69 N. to latitude 74 N. on the east side and in Melville Bay, not far from the land, a strange phenomenon is heard resembling a very weird whistling in a high note and gradually dying away to a very low one. It is only heard when it is calm, and most distinctly when in a boat or in a ship's lazarette which is nearly level with the water. On deck it is seldom heard." The above interested me as it describes what I noticed. Captain Barron believes it to be connected with the Aurora Borealis, which he states can be heard but not seen when the sun shines on a summer's night in the Arctic.

June 19th. Thursday. The engine starting up brought me on deck. The fog had lifted and the *Arctic* and *Wolf* could be seen astern, while the *Bear* was to the north of us. Some time after we were steaming through a nice lead into open water ahead. I was on the bridge, where the second mate was in charge, and the Captain was in the crow's nest, which he seldom left. Presently we noticed the lead very narrow, being little wider than the ship. A moment later we were among crunched up ice and within twenty or thirty yards of the open water and the ship was slowing up owing to her progress being impeded

by the ice. The Captain called down, "Get over there, some of you men, and push that ice out of the way with poles." We were almost through, and it looked as though a few pieces pushed away would relieve the situation. Specksioneer Lyon and twenty others were immediately over, and began pushing. Almost at once Lyon called up, "It's coming together, sir," and sure enough we were caught between two points of great floes coming together and the *Aurora* was in the greatest danger of being lost within the next few minutes. The Captain immediately came down and began giving orders. All boats were provisioned and lowered away. I rushed to my cabin and was rolling up my blankets, when he brought the log, which he asked me to put with my things. I took my bundles on deck with a rifle and gun, and by this time the ship was so squeezed that my door would not open or shut, and she had a heavy port list. As the *Arctic* and *Wolf* were a short distance astern of us, there was no danger to life and I thoroughly enjoyed the excitement of being shipwrecked so comfortably. With a bump the ship righted herself greatly and presently, after straining and groaning, she slipped up considerably. Her water line was now above the crunching ice and she was for the time being tolerably safe. This all happened in a very short time and it was a wonderful escape. I went on to the ice forward with the mate and engineer; and while there the ship slipped up higher still, so that she was almost out of the water.

"Aurora" at Cape York

The surgeon of the *Arctic* paid us a visit at this time and took the two photographs here reproduced after some retouching. The first one shows the ship in the nips; in it I happened to be in the foreground. In the second she has slipped up and is almost out of the water. The mate, engineer and myself were on the ice in front at the time. Sailors were a little superstitious, and did not like their ship being photographed while in distress, so these pictures were very hurriedly taken. For some hours the *Aurora* rested in this position and we knew that eventually the ice would open and let her into the water. Our principal anxiety was about the stern post and rudder; but these fortunately escaped injury. Our propeller had only two blades, so when the ship was sailing or stuck in the ice the propeller was always stopped with the blades up and down. While in this position the whole thing could easily be unshipped, and we carried an extra one. As looms were flying about in numbers along the floe edge just in front of the ship I shot a big bag of them. They fell into the water, but drifted against the ice edge where I picked them up. The *Arctic* and *Wolf* were pretty tightly caught astern of us, but they had not to abandon the ships as we had. During the afternoon the pack was tighter than ever and it made weird sounds at times. We had our meals on board and were all very happy at our wonderful escape, especially the Captain, who was determined to take home a cargo of whales in his own ship instead of return-

ing as passenger on one of the others. During the night a crack occurred under the bows. This opened by degrees, letting the ship down. We hoisted up our boats and the shipwreck was over. When whalers go into Melville Bay they generally arrange a quantity of provisions so that it can be easily reached in event of their suddenly having to leave the ship as we had done.

June 20th. Friday. After our escaping from the nips, we steamed in a northerly direction, with the *Arctic* and *Wolf* a heavy fog came on. I was very tired, so went and lay down.

As the engine room was aft, a person in any of the staterooms could easily hear the bell there being rung from the crow's nest. How long I had been lying down, I don't know, but something awoke me. I knew, from the sound of the engine, we were going fast ahead, but I heard the bell ring, " stop her," and then immediately full speed astern. Knowing that something was wrong, I rushed on deck; it was very thick and I heard some one say, " O my God, we are lost! " and just then on the starboard side of the ship, I saw a great berg towering above us. We just missed it! All was well! We steamed dead slow for awhile and I realized that those who " went down to the sea in ships " could have a great deal of excitement in two days. About an hour after this a steam whistle blew right ahead. The fog instantly lifted a little and there was the *Arctic* shooting across our bows. We both stopped, and the Captain went over to her. When the Captain

came on board again the fog was gone and we were off Conical Rock. The ice was loose here and the two ships kept together until we passed Cape Dudley Diggs. Here we drifted farther apart, but were within sight of each other all the way to Wolstenholm Island.

During the night we arrived at the island, but found that the *Bear* had been there ahead of us, so we directed our course towards Carey Islands, the ice being loose, but the weather pretty thick.

June 21st. Saturday. Heavy fog and plenty of ice, so our speed was slow. Sometimes it cleared a little and we could see for several miles ahead. There were numbers of birds about, principally guillemot and eider duck. They probably had headquarters at Wolstenholm, and Carey Islands. Natives repaired to Wolstenholm at this season of the year and collected eggs; but Carey Islands were in the middle of the Sound and, I fancy, left pretty well undisturbed. During the afternoon it became very thick, and for a time we stopped steaming, as we could not make out the leads and there was some heavy ice about. Late in the evening it cleared a little and we ran in to Carey Island. The *Arctic* was ahead of us, and the *Wolf* in the distance. I wrote some letters in the evening as I thought there might be a chance of sending them on board the *Bear*. Our Captain had decided to go from this place to the whaling ground, and leave the Greely part of it to the expedition ships, as the owners would not thank him for risking the vessel in higher latitudes and

possibly missing his chance for whales in Lancaster Sound. The *Arctic* had a boat on shore, but saw nothing of explorers or records. The *Bear* left the islands after midnight, but was not near us, so I had no chance of sending my letters. This was the last we saw of the relief ships. They picked Greely up within twenty-four hours at Cape Sabine. We knew nothing of it until later, when we heard the news from some of the slower ships, which met the expedition returning with the rescued, and their story was as follows:

June 22nd. After the *Bear* left Carey Islands, she joined the *Thetis* and they proceeded to Cape Sabine, where they arrived during the evening. From records found on Brevoort Island near Cape Sabine, they knew where the explorer was, and he was picked up by Lieutenant Colwell of the *Bear* almost at the place where he, Colwell, landed after the loss of the *Proteus*. Of the twenty-five who left with Greely a few years before, but seven were now alive, and the story they told of starvation and death was in tune with others we have all read of Arctic exploration and was doubly impressive when told to us, situated as we were in the dreary regions where the tragedy had been enacted. Greely had done his work well. His two years at Fort Conger had been well spent. Lockwood had attained latitude 83° 24′ in 1882, beating all previous records. Most valuable magnetic observations had been made and the interior of Grinnell Land had been explored. The orders to abandon Fort Conger were carried

Underwood.

A Dreary Arctic Scene

out in 1883 and then their troubles began. Relief had not come, depots of provisions had not been established, and in a very dejected state they had arrived at Cape Sabine, where they established their final camp, the history of which supplies Arctic literature with its blackest chapter.

On June 22nd Schley arrived at Cape Sabine. No Arctic expedition had ever done so well by this date, its first year. A week or two later there would probably not have been one survivor. This relief expedition had been perfectly successful in its gallant dash and had arrived not a minute too soon.

CHAPTER XIII

CAREY ISLANDS TO LANCASTER SOUND

"Here winter holds his unrejoicing court;
And through his airy hall the loud misrule
Of driving tempest is forever heard.
Here the grim tyrant meditates his wrath,
Here arms his winds and all-subduing frost.
Moulds his fierce hail and treasures up his snows
With which he now oppresses half the globe."

June 22nd. Sunday. It was blowing very hard from the south, and there was much ice, so we had a difficult time picking our way. The weather was also bitterly cold. Again birds were very numerous. We were making our way to Princess Charlotte's Monument on the west side, and it was slow work. The *Arctic* was ahead of us and not moving on any faster. We felt the loss of the relief ships. They were always a cause of some excitement, and there was a chance of finding Greely so long as we kept going north. Now that that interest was removed, I consoled myself with the knowledge that we were nearing the magnetic pole, and would soon be steaming up Lancaster Sound, the highway to the northwest along which so many brave men had gone never to return. During the afternoon it became more squally, and when I turned in we were making little headway, but the wind was going down.

June 23rd. Monday. We were steaming in tolerably open water when I came on deck. The *Arctic* was ahead. Birds were numerous—some geese with hundreds of eider and guillemot. After breakfast we saw land ahead, that is, to the west, and during the afternoon were within a mile or so of it,—Princess Charlotte's Monument. There was much loose ice to the south and a straight floe edge to the north of us, and to this we hooked on two hundred yards to the east of the *Arctic*. We did not care to go closer to the rocks lest the ice should come in on us. I saw Dr. Crawford take the *Arctic's* launch and go ashore to look for eggs. Returning a couple of hours after, steam went down and the *Arctic* was obliged to unhook and go after them. It appeared that the boiler was too exposed and the cold so intense that they simply could not keep steam up. The launch had been keeping under the lee of the floe as much as possible, and when steam went down she began to drift away from this into rough water. For a few minutes things looked bad for her, as she was a wretched sea boat with her heavy boiler and engine. During the night we unhooked and worked our way towards the south.

June 24th. Tuesday. Day fine, but blowing from the south. A lot of ice on the coast, and to the south and east all was white. We were now where whales might be seen and preparations were made. Foregoers and lines were tested, harpoons examined, guns cleaned and fired to make sure they would work, lines coiled away in

boats, and every one was on the lookout. We never heard of Disco or Cape York now. All was Lancaster Sound and Pond's Bay, with weird tales of cold days spent rock-nosing off Cape Kater and in Cumberland Gulf. All these preparations did not hurry matters in the least. The king of this country decided that we should remain for a day or two where we were, and so in the evening we were hooked on almost where the morning found us.

June 25th. Wednesday. About noon the wind died down and the currents, setting south, took the ice off the coast so that we were able to crawl along a little; but a few hours later we made fast to the land floe off Cape Horsburgh, as the pack was drifting in again. We saw many walrus here, but did not like to spend time at them, as we wanted to be the first ship up the Sound. At tea time we moved along a little further and by bed-time we tied up again. Some of our tanks were pumped out and cleaned, ready for the anticipated oil. There were a number of seals in sight, but they were left alone, as the time was precious.

June 26th. Thursday. As the ship was hard and fast I took a rifle and went after some seals which were to be seen a mile away. Before going very far I found myself climbing over hummocks of old ice which had drifted down Jones Sound, and it was very difficult walking. On one side of a hummock the snow would be perfectly smooth and frozen hard, while on the other side it would

Beset

Kyaks

be so soft that one at once went through the surface and had to clamber along in several feet of it.

Again, one would come to a perfectly rotten and honeycombed piece of ice underneath which there was a foot or two of water, and below the water could be seen the solid old floe; this made walking so difficult that I returned to the ship without getting a shot.

June 27th and *28th* were uneventful. We moved little, and Cape Horsburgh was in sight all the time, but on

June 29th, Sunday, we had a good lead along the shore floe and were steaming fast through it when I came on deck. A number of bears were seen about noon, but the wind was from the south and the ice was coming in, so we hurried along. As there were a number of them, they were probably attracted by some dead beast.

Barron tells of seeing once about one hundred bears around a dead whale. He also tells of men being devoured by these creatures.

In the days of muzzle-loaders there was more risk than there is now, because if one came suddenly upon a bear with cubs and missed his shot, there might not be time to load again.

Late in the evening we were off Cape Warrender and were steaming amongst loose ice at bedtime. Several narwhals were seen during the afternoon, but we paid no attention to them.

June 30th. Monday. Steaming up the Sound towards a solid floe at breakfast time with many white whales in sight. We steered south along

the ice edge, and seeing an Eskimo standing on it, we sailed up to him. He was a very uncouth looking individual after the smartly dressed gentlemen on the Greenland side. His clothes did not fit and he was otherwise careless about his appearance. He had in his hand a narwhal's tusk, and as we came close we heard him singing "Bonny Laddie—Highland Laddie." This he had probably learned from his parents, they having learned it from the whalers in sailing-ship days. In old times it was customary to lower the boats and tow the ship through the leads to the above tune. I was told this, so it may be true. The native came on board. He was much more like an American Indian than a Greenland Eskimo. Before he had been many minutes on board he was taken aft and relieved of his tusk by the second mate, getting in return some trifle: the gentleman belonged to Navy Board Inlet, on the south side, and not far away.

The Captain had had a lot of paddles made for some of the boats. It was possible to approach whales with very little noise when the paddles were used, so we tried them frequently for narwhal hunting. As there were numbers of these creatures in sight, we had a couple of boats out after them. A sharp lookout was kept from the crow's nest for whales coming up the Sound. We hooked on to the ice about two miles from the south shore, and put a boat out on either side of the ship and about a hundred yards away. These boats were hooked on by laying the long steering

A Good Bag of Bears

oar on the ice. Our narwhal hunters had no luck, so they came on board.

July 1st. Tuesday. We were fast to the ice with a boat on each side all day. The Captain had a long interview with the native on the subject of whales. He seemed to understand maps well, and was able to point out where he had seen fish; from what I could make out, a good number had been in the Sound. I spent the afternoon in a boat with the Captain trying to get a narwhal. We saw dozens and came pretty close to several lots, but did not get one good shot, although we fired several times.

The harpoons we used for this work were much smaller than the regular whaling harpoon and were made of the same tough Swedish iron.

Before turning in I spent an hour on deck and heard narwhals and white whales breathing about us all the time. Everything looked propitious.

July 2nd. Wednesday. I had a dream during the night that we had succeeded in killing a narwhal and that our youngest harpooner, Gyles, had killed it. Dreams were often recounted at the breakfast table, so I told this, and, as luck would have it, before dinner Gyles killed our first narwhal. My night visions were subsequently treated with great respect, except by the steward, who felt, no doubt, that I was infringing a little on his rights. A coldness sprang up between us such as only professional jealousy can create, and which evinced itself the following day when he did not ask me to help him to pick the raisins for the duff

— Thursday being duff day. The forenoon success gave quite an impetus to the narwhal fishing, but no more were captured, as the elusive beasts always went down just as we were almost within shot.

The narwhal (Monodon Monoceros) is to me the most beautiful of the whale species. The one captured by us was twelve feet long without the tusk. This measured four feet in length and about four inches around the base. It ended in a rather sharp point and had a spiral groove running from right to left. The horn, or rather tooth, protrudes from the upper jaw of the male, generally on the left side. It only protrudes from the female head as a freak. On the right side a small undeveloped horn is found embedded in the skull of the male, but two undeveloped teeth are found in the female. The narwhal is the only vertebrate animal in which bilateral symmetry is not the rule. The body is whitish, marbled with blackish brown, and about four of them yield a ton of oil. With an axe I easily split the cancellous skull and removed the embedded tusk. We saw hundreds of white whales this day (Delphinapterus leucas). These are cousins of the narwhals, but generally a little larger. The *Aurora* had great luck the previous year up Prince Regent's Inlet in getting a good catch of them. This was managed by driving them ashore. They were skinned and the skin made into leather. Each side counted as one skin.

They go in schools like porpoises, but generally only three or four abreast, therefore it takes a

large school a considerable time to go past. They are peculiar in having no dorsal fin, and their yellowish white colour makes them rather conspicuous.

July 3rd. Thursday. Before breakfast a bear was seen in the water and shot by McLean from a boat. Bears are always lucky and we knew that something better would soon come. While at breakfast a female narwhal was killed. It must have been fourteen feet long. I removed the two little embedded horns. Narwhals were very difficult to capture with the appliances in use at this time, the harpoon gun being only effective at ten or fifteen yards. As the beast generally went down when one was about twenty yards away, a long shot had to be taken with a very clumsy gun. Very little of the narwhal showed above water, just the top of its head and back. Of course there was a good sized animal immediately under the water, so that a harpoon might miss the back and still lodge in the whale. It was very cold and we had several snow showers. The bear was skinned and the skin salted and put in a barrel, no attempt being made to dry or otherwise cure any of the bear skins taken during the voyage. They were kept green.

July 4th. Friday. During the night there was a fall of snow and a breeze from the east had driven some loose ice up the Sound, and pieces were constantly breaking off the floe. These drifted down the Sound with the current; but when there was wind from the east much of this

broken ice would drift up and surround us. We were dodging about under canvas in the morning, and the wind, which was bitterly cold, was going down. During the forenoon we sailed up to the floe edge and hooked on about eight miles from the south side, putting two boats on the bran, that is, one on each side of the ship. The loose ice had drifted away, and as the afternoon was very fine the Captain decided to try the unies, as the narwhals were called, and I went with him. One does not generally see very many unies together, but they were in fours and fives all over the place this afternoon and very shy. Just as the boat would get within twenty-five yards or so, off they would go. The Captain made a long shot at one and got fast. For a few minutes the line ran out rapidly, but the shot had been a long one and the harpoon drew, so we came on board disappointed.

Paddles were used instead of oars, as they made less noise. On the fishing ground we avoided noise as much as possible and for this reason the ship seldom steamed, but kept her fires banked and moved about under canvas.

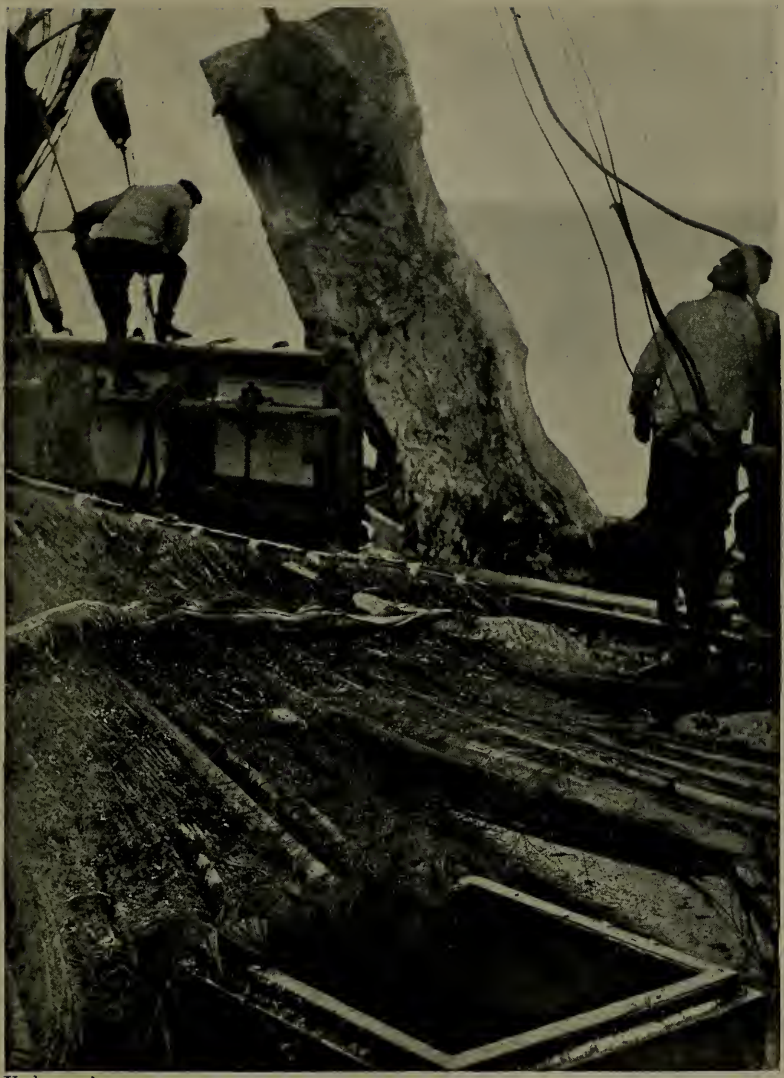
CHAPTER XIV

OUR FIRST WHALE

"Hoist out the boat at once and slacken sail."

July 5th. Saturday. A beautiful day. After breakfast I was in a bran boat on the starboard side of the ship and one hundred and fifty yards away, when I heard a commotion on board, and in less time than it takes to tell, all our boats, except the upper quarter ones, were in the water and hurrying off towards us. Our steering oar was holding the boat to the ice, so it did not take long to get away, and we pulled hard for several minutes before the boat-steerer whispered: "Avast pulling." At this time the boats were scattered along the ice edge a hundred yards apart. A whale had been seen coming up the Sound. We knew that it would continue up under the ice, and failing to find a hole through which it could breathe, it would turn and come to the surface near the edge of the ice and close to some of the boats, and that unless we had very bad luck, it was doomed. In a few minutes we saw it a quarter of a mile down the Sound; it looked like two black islands, one the head and the other the back. It lay there for several minutes and we

could distinctly hear it breathe. We saw the spout, then it sank slowly and disappeared. The excitement was now intense. The next time it would be beside a boat — which boat? Would it come up under us or beside us? Perfect silence was observed and the suspense of waiting for the first whale, I shall never forget. Probably ten minutes passed, when up came the fish almost beside the boat in which George Matheson was harpooner. As he was already standing by his gun, no order was given, and one sweep of the boat-steerer's oar gave him his shot. The gun went off, the foregoer sprang into the air and every man shouted: "A fall! a fall!" The whale hesitated a few seconds before going down, and Matheson put in a hand-harpoon also. He was not ten feet from the whale when he fired, and almost touching when he put in the hand-harpoon. The fast boat now hoisted its jack and the fish went down and started towards the south side of the Sound, past the ship's stern. We pulled in this direction for all we were worth, the boat nearest the fast boat standing by it so as to supply more lines if necessary. When we had pulled hard for ten minutes, we slowed down, the boats keeping some distance apart, and shortly after, fifty yards from us, the whale came up. Immediately a second boat, the mate's, got fast, the huge creature going down at once, and away we went again. When our quarry next appeared, about fifteen or twenty minutes later, the nearest boat immediately began lancing, and presently we were at



Underwood.

Bone on Deck and Blubber Coming on Board

it. Unfortunately we all had our backs to the scene of action, except the boat-steerer and harpooner. The heavy blast, every time it breathed, sounded uncomfortably close. In a few minutes the boat-steerer called, "Back, all!" and we immediately backed water, the whale hitting the water once or twice with his tail and going down; again we were off, but not so far this time. When he next appeared he rolled about a good deal and we were afraid to go close, so the second mate fired a Welsh's rocket under one of his flukes and then we all backed off. The rocket was fired from a harpoon gun. It had a charge of powder in its trocar-shaped head, and a fuse running down the shaft. When this exploded the whale plunged fearfully and lashed the water with his huge horizontal tail. After this he was quiet and the water shot from his blow-hole was blood-stained. We now closed in again, and lances were plunged into his neck and churned up and down. Breathing became labored, and after a final flurry, his spirit passed and his blubber and bone were ours. What a cheer we gave! What a feeling of exultation! How near I felt to happy, unconventional, primitive man at that moment! As the whale was lying on its back with the flukes hanging out, a round hole was cut in each of these, through which a piece of rope was run and the flukes reverently folded across his breast; with a knife all lines attached to harpoons were cut free so that the fast boats might haul them in. The tail was fastened to the bow of a boat, and, getting in line, we

all proceeded to tow the fish back to the ship, which, by the way, made no effort to help us, as the weather was fine and there was nothing in sight. Arriving alongside, the tail was fastened forward and the head aft along the port side. We went on board, and after dinner, as I sat smoking with the Captain on the cabin skylight, I could not help feeling that the life of a whaler was the only one for me.

At 1.30 P. M., all hands were called to flense the whale alongside. By means of tackle made fast to the lower jaw, called the nose tackle, the mouth could be opened and the tongue and the bone removed. The right whale (Balaena Mysticetus), of which this was a specimen, supplies practically all the whalebone. It grows from the sides of the upper jaw, three hundred blades hanging down on each side. They are ten and twelve inches wide where inserted into the gum, and narrow as they descend. The inner edge is frayed and the outer unbroken. These frayed inner edges form a sort of sieve through which the water passes when the whale shuts its mouth, but through which the whale food cannot pass.

The bone from each side is brought on board generally in one piece, sufficient gum being taken with it to hold the lamellae together. This is divided with a wedge into smaller pieces of about a dozen lamellae each, and subsequently each lamella is slit off with the wedge and freed from gum and oil. The longest blades are those in the centre on each side and they vary in length ac-

Bone Coming on Board

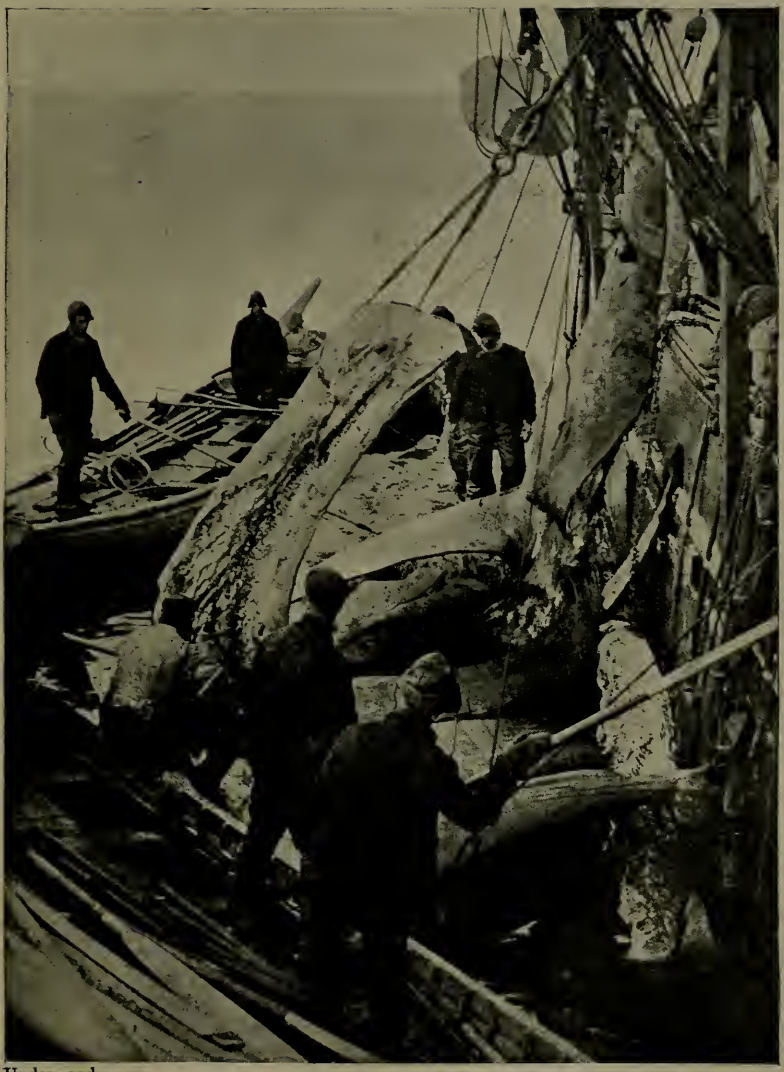
cording to the size of the animal — twelve feet being large. The size of a whale is estimated by the length of the longest blade, "a twelve-foot fish" being one in which this measures twelve feet. The bone is about a quarter of an inch thick and tears easily into long pieces. It is an albuminous substance, containing calcium phosphate, and can be moulded when heated by steam, retaining its shape if cooled under pressure.

The busy part of a whaler during flensing is the deck between the main mast and foremast. Between these masts is the blubber guy, a stout wire rope to which blocks are strapped, and through these are rove the tackles which haul the long strips of blubber on board as they are pulled off the whale.

The specksioneer and all the harpooners except the mate get on to the whale or into the mollie boats in attendance; they have spikes on their boots to keep them from slipping; and they remove the blubber and bone with their knives and spades. The mate of a ship is a busy man, but the mate of our whaler flensing was, I think, the busiest person I ever saw. Acting under the captain's directions and from his own initiative, he was everywhere, giving orders and seeing them carried out.

In removing the blubber the first thing done is to start cutting a ribbon of it around the neck, called the kant. This piece, probably two feet wide, when pulled upon, turns the carcass, and from it, running towards the tail, the long strips

are cut and hauled on board. First the piece around the neck is well started. Then with spades a strip is started. As this is hauled on by the capstan the men with spades cut along each side and it is simply peeled off. When the piece raised up is several hundred pounds, it is cut off, hoisted on board, and the tackle refastened. When the exposed part has been flensed, the neck piece or kant is again pulled on by the windlass, which turns the whale over a little, and so on. When all the blubber has been removed, the head tackle is cut out and the carcass, or kreng as it is called, sinks as soon as the tail is cut off. The tail is taken on board and used afterwards for chopping blubber on. The blubber as it comes on board is cut into smaller pieces by the boat-steerers and thrown into the 'tween-decks by the line managers, from which it is taken a day or two later, cut small and put into tanks. Flensing a fish is a very cheerful occupation and the ship is certainly oily, but there is no unpleasant smell. As soon as a whale is killed, the fulmar petrels (P. Glacialis) come in swarms, and they gorge themselves with fat until they cannot sit up; then they become dreadfully ill and begin all over again. There was always a current where we flensed and this current would carry away a stream of overgorged birds, too full to do anything but drift. I sat in a boat one day and amused myself catching the birds as they paddled past until I had numbers in the boat. I found it better, however, to leave them in the water, or



Underwood.

Flensing. Showing the smaller Boats

to let them stagger about among the men's feet at work. This was a ten-foot fish and would probably yield thirteen tons of oil. The following is a copy of the scale used long ago by whalers:—

Bone in feet	Oil in tons
1	1½
2	3
3	3½
4	4
5	4½
6	5½
7	7
8	9
9	11
10	13
11	16
12	20

Of course there are exceptions to this old rule.

The afternoon clouded up while we were so busy, and by the time we had finished, it was blowing. When I turned in there was some snow and it was much colder.

July 6th. Sunday. I found the ship with the main yard aback, dodging about in a rather choppy sea. The sky was cloudy and it looked like winter. Three ships were in sight down the Sound, all under canvas. We were quite close to the south side, as the captain believed that fish would come up that way, and it proved that he was correct. After breakfast a whale was seen blowing among some loose ice to the north of us. Six boats put off in pursuit, while the ship followed. Two of the boats kept straight to the ice while the other four, including Jack McLean's, in which I was, kept around it. The sea was quite choppy and the air cold, but we warmed up with the rowing.

The boats going straight to the ice were able to pass through and entered open water beyond before we got around to it. The fish came up and gave the second mate a long shot just as she was going down; but a harpoon easily enters a whale's bent back so he got fast and "A fall! a fall!" was joyfully shouted by us all. As we passed the fast boat we saw her jack flying proudly and her bow enveloped in smoke as McKechnie tightened the line around the bollard head. Gyles was standing by, so with the other boats we pulled in the direction the fish had gone, and as we were getting close to more loose ice, those of us who were rowing and consequently looking astern saw the fast boat—which had been well down by the bow—right herself and we knew that the iron had drawn. We pulled away however in the hope of again getting fast, but this whale was only seen once more, a long way off, and after a hard row through loose ice we gave up. The ship had followed and she now picked us up. As the wind had gone down we sailed back towards the south side and made fast to the solid floe, getting our bran boats out before tea time. We picked up the fast boat on the way, she having her lines on board. The weather looked very settled at bedtime and the unusual exertion of the past two days made me sleep well.

July 7th. Monday. Summer had returned by morning and the making off had already begun when I came on deck. We were lying almost opposite the mouth of Admiralty Inlet and fast to

Main Deck of a Whaler while Flensing

a nice straight floe edge with not a bit of loose ice any place. There was more life on deck at the "making off" than there was at the flensing and every one was busy. The blubber had been cut into pieces two or three feet square and put down the main hatch. These big cubes of a faint orange color were taken on deck with the winch, and any pieces of adherent flesh being removed they were cut into blocks of a few pounds each. Along each side of the deck stood uprights; on the top of each was a plate with spikes called a clash, and beside each stood a harpooner with a long sharp knife. A block of blubber was lifted by a man with clash hooks and stuck on the clash spikes, with the skin up. The harpooner cut the skin off and the piece was then thrown into a heap in front of the speck trough. The speck trough, which was about two and a half feet square, was placed across the deck over the hatch; forward of this stood the boat-steerers and in front of each was a block of whale's tail resting on the opened back lid of the trough. Each man had a chopper, and as the pieces of blubber from the heap were thrown to them, they chopped them into little bits and swept them into the speck trough, from which they were conducted to the tanks through a canvas tube attached to an opening underneath. A man in the 'tween-decks directed this tube to the tank he desired to fill. The bone was stowed down the quarter hatch. It was always important to keep the ship clean and get the blubber away, as there was no regularity about the appearance of

fish. A number might come at once, and several being killed, the crew could be blocked with work, while again there might not be another seen for a month.

When the making off was over, the decks were scrubbed down.

July 8th. Tuesday. The *Arctic*, *Esquimaux* and *Narwhal* were all in sight to the north of us. During the forenoon we lowered away for a fish, six boats going after it. We saw the spout near the ice edge and were ready for its return, but it came not, probably finding a breathing place somewhere and after resting coming out north of us. We waited a long time and had a tiresome row back. The native picked up by us when we first came had been landed near the south shore, where he had his dogs. Now we saw three coming along the floe and we picked them up, sledges, dogs and all. They belonged to Navy Board Inlet. Hardly were they on board when all hands were called and the boats were away, as spouting had been seen astern. I was in one of the four boats between the ship and the south coast, and we must have sat there half an hour before anything occurred; in fact, we thought the fish had gone elsewhere. The men were all pretty restless, when suddenly the water broke two boats from me and the report of a gun was followed by the cry — "A fall." I saw the whale throw its tail straight up as it went slowly down; then it started north and we pulled past the ship in that direction and scattered out to wait its reappearance. In the usual

length of time the fish appeared in our midst and another iron was put in. Away we went again in the best of spirits. Of course, the fast boat in each case remained and moved only as towed by the whale. I was in Watson's boat, and at the whale's next appearance we were almost on the top of it and he immediately lanced, but the game stood very little tickling of that sort and was soon off. Again it came up beside us, and this time very breathless as it had such a short breathing spell before. Three boats were at once busy with lances, and in a very short time we registered a kill. When the lines were cut, and the flukes and tail attended to, we returned to the ship, pulling to the shanty, "A-roving, a-roving, since roving has been my ruin," and having the whale in tow, we were very much elated by our afternoon's work, but there was a great surprise in store for us. Arriving on board, the whale was made fast and I went down to have some coffee. When I came up I found that the crew of the first fast boat, having taken their line to the ice to facilitate pulling it in, had utterly failed to get it beyond a certain point. Thinking it had fouled something at the bottom, they were ordered to come on board and take their line in with the steam winch. This was done, and when after great pulling the very tight line was almost in, behold, there was a dead whale at the end of it. One must be on board a whaler to appreciate a pleasant surprise like this. It is not so much the extra money, as the satisfaction of success. What had happened was this.

The first harpoon fortunately struck deep in the shoulder of whale No. 1, which immediately sounded in shallow water and broke its neck. No. 2 was not a fast fish at all when we first saw it. Now, we had a fish on each side, and as soon as the crew had refreshed themselves with supper, the work of flensing started with a will. When things were well under way I turned in, very tired, and when I tumbled out four hours after, one fish was on board. The men were now ordered to turn in for four hours, except, of course, the lookout and a few nondescript people like myself and the engineer. I learned another thing about the ways of the Arctic this morning; directly the crew had turned in, the clock in the companion was put forward an hour, and when two hours had passed it went on another hour, then all hands were called and our second whale taken on board. This fish was flensed in about three hours, the crew turning in, except a boat's crew on the bran and the lookout. The *Esquimaux* came steaming towards us during the night, which annoyed us greatly, as the fish were coming up the south side and we thought our berth rather good. She steamed past and hooked on five or six hundred yards south of us. The *Aurora* immediately unhooked and passed her, while she repeated the performance mid a storm of abuse from both barrels. Our Captain was afraid to go closer to the shore, so we remained where we were. When we hooked on first, the natives had left us, going north to the other ships. We now saw a number

of well loaded sledges coming up the south coast. It was evident that they would board the *Esquimaux* first, so we would lose the chance of bartering with them. Consequently, we sent a boat off to pick them up and bring them on board. Our opponents saw what we were doing, so sent a boat also. As it had a shorter distance to go than ours, it picked up the whole caravan and brought it back. Our boat noticing a sledge far away with two people in it, waited for them and brought them to the *Aurora*. It happened that these two old natives owned all the barter on the other sledges, and as we kept them on board, everything had to be turned over to the *Aurora* by the other ship, greatly to their disgust. The Captain obtained from them quite a lot of narwhals' tusks and bear skins. The incident amused us very much.

July 9th. Wednesday. Two boats on the bran and the balance of the crew washing down the ship. I had my first ride on an Eskimo sled. Giving a native a plug of tobacco, he removed from his sled all the movable things and I got on. Then addressing a few remarks to his dogs, off they started. As the ice was smooth I enjoyed it at first, but we came to a hummocky place where it was not so pleasant. I did my best to stop the dogs, but they followed their leader, and finally I tumbled off and returned to the ship, the dogs going on probably home. The runners of the sledge were made of whales' jaws with bone cross pieces lashed to them. When I went on board I found

a boat just starting for a bear to the north of us. I don't think I ever saw one any distance from the water; this was along the floe edge and several miles away. Between us there was a peninsula of ice on which there were some hummocks. I landed here to try a stalk and the boat rowed around. For a time I did very well, the bear wandering aimlessly and slowly about, but before I got within three hundred yards of him, he had seen me and was off to the water. I fired several times, but without effect. He plunged in and started to swim across from the peninsula to the main floe. The boat had by this time doubled the cape and bruin had a bullet in his head before he had gone very far. We hauled him on to the ice and skinned him. The men cut some steaks for themselves, but I never had the pleasure of trying polar bear, as the Captain did not care for carnivorous animals as a food.

A great many white whales were now around. I wished we could have driven a school of them up a fiord the way they drive the potheads up the Shetland voes. When we returned we found that a narwhal had been killed, but we did not like to disturb the right whales by hunting these very much.

As the ship was generally hooked on to the floe which extended across the Sound, her bow was pointed up and her stern down, consequently astern nearly always meant down the Sound, as the current setting in that direction held the ship in that position.

CHAPTER XV

FLOE EDGE FISHING

"Look through the sleet and look through frost,
Look to the Greenlands' caves and coast.
By the iceberg is a sail
Chasing of the swarthy whale;
Mother doubtful, mother dread,
Tell us, has the good ship sped?"

July 10th. Thursday. We moved from our neighbor, the *Esquimaux*, and dodged north under canvas, hooking on five or six miles away. The Sound was frozen completely across this year, and during our stay, the ice never opened. Probably we could have forced our way in had we been bent on exploration, but the ice floe edge fishing was very desirable and suited us exactly.

All hands were employed making off when I came up and we had a busy day getting two whales into our tanks. Although they were not very large, it took many hours and every one was tired when it was over.

The Sound being frozen over was a great disappointment to me as it prevented our going up Barrow Strait, or visiting Beechy Island, where Sir John Franklin spent his last winter. There I was, within a few miles of the place consecrated to the memory of those heroes and doomed to re-

turn home without seeing it. Up this waterway, Sir James Ross and McClure had passed to make their great discoveries of the magnetic polar area and the northwest passage. There had been, at one time or another, nearly all the Arctic explorers, of whom I had ever heard.

As the clock in the companion had been moved about so much lately, and as there was not a watch, on the ship, going, our ideas of time were vague in the extreme.

July 11th. Friday. The weather was fine, and during the afternoon, positively warm. The boats spent the day on the bran, but there were no whales in sight. An interesting phenomenon was, however, in evidence, namely, refraction. Byam Martin's Mountains looked wild and precipitous, and the coast line appeared as a continuous high cliff, quite unlike the land we had been beside for the past week. What I found most interesting was to watch the *Narwhal*, which was lying not far off. At one moment her hull stretched up, making her look like an old line of battle ship, while her masts shrank down, then the hull would close down like a concertina and the masts would stretch up to the sky. Pieces of ice and little hummocks became great white chimneys and big icy mountains. I saw a row of white masses far above the ice. They looked like puffs of smoke from a battery, the guns being pointed up. Presently a white lump would appear on the ice underneath each puff and in a minute they would become connected and look like a row of top-heavy white pil-

lars. The middle part would then become attenuated until it resembled a white thread and then the tops of the pillars would settle down and disappear. The changes were kaleidoscopic and one could watch them by the hour. When the sun was warm, we often had this phenomenon, owing to the different densities of the various atmospheric strata.

July 12th. Saturday. Hearing "All hands" during the night, I tumbled out of bed, picked up my bundle of clothes, ran on deck and got into a lower quarter boat that was being lowered. Probably within sixty seconds after being asleep I was pulling for dear life towards some loose ice north of us, beyond which a whale had been seen. When we reached the ice, we rested and put on some clothes. The fish was just as likely to come up where we were as at any other place, so we did not want to frighten him by disturbing the ice. After a wait of ten minutes, we saw and heard the blast of a fish to the northeast. It had turned and was going out again. We pulled through the ice with difficulty; it cannot be pushed about by a whale boat, but we kept on in the direction in which the whale was last seen. However it did not come up again where we could see it, and so we returned to the ship. It was very cold coming back and had begun to blow.

The sky was much overcast during the afternoon, and as it was blowing hard, the boats were taken in before bedtime.

July 13th. Sunday. There was a regular little

gale this day, so we kept in open water, with the main yard aback and the fires banked. We received news of the Greely party from the *Arctic* as she had spoken some of the slower ships and heard it from them.

During the afternoon quite a choppy sea was on and ice was coming in as the wind was blowing up the Sound. We dodged out through this ice and then sailed north, sighting nearly all the other ships of the fleet. Sundays were stormy days in this place, and to sit on a ship all day, listening to her strain, and to the wind howling through the shrouds, was not pleasant, especially when we were only killing time and accomplishing nothing. When I turned in, we were still under canvas.

July 14th, Monday, was a gloomy day. We were hooked to the ice, with a boat out on each side. The crew were busy filling the bunkers and then cleaning up, also overhauling some fishing gear. The blacksmith was employed straightening out harpoons. The iron of which they are made is soft and tough. It bends and twists every way but does not break.

I amused myself polishing little tusks which I had taken out of the female narwhals' heads. We were very restless, knowing that the *Arctic* had more whales than we had. We heard from her that all the ships had fish a few days before.

Tuesday. Two narwhals were killed, male and female. I was in a boat with the Captain, but we did not get any. We used paddles instead of oars, as we could approach more quietly with them.

July 16th. Wednesday. We were still hanging on to the ice with a boat on the bran on each side. Again we pursued narwhals and secured another fine male with a four-foot horn. There were such crowds of these beautiful creatures that I wished the Captain would turn all hands after them, but he was afraid of disturbing any whales which might be around so we did not pursue them vigorously. Some white whales passed us, but we were not far enough up the Sound for white whaling.

Narwhals are playful creatures and very noisy. The first thing any whale does on coming up is to blow most of the air out of its lungs, and this in a very noisy manner. For its size, the narwhal makes more noise than the others. Before going down, they generally take a deep, noisy inspiration. Nearly all the time we were in Lancaster Sound, if calm, we could hear whales of some kind puffing and blowing around. I often saw narwhals raise their tusks out of the water, and when black whales were taking a final header, on starting for a long dive, they generally threw the tail up in the air in a graceful manner. We did not like to see one going tail up, as it meant that probably we had seen the last of that particular fish.

July 17th, Thursday, was a fine day with mirage in the morning; the effects were wonderful. A small piece of ice, miles away, would look like a berg. About noon we made out that the *Polynia* had a fish and this was more than we

could bear. We decided that there was a Jonah on board and circumstances pointed strongly to one of the crew. A suit of his clothes was procured, with his cap, half a pound of powder was packed into it with a fuse attached and it was run up to the main yard arm. The Captain went below and turned in, but rifles and ammunition were supplied and we had a lively practice at the effigy for a time; then the fuse was touched off and bang went Jonah. This performance cleared the atmosphere forward completely, every one believing that the spell was broken and that we would now find fish. In the cabin, Jack, the steward, greased the horseshoe and that made the after guard feel better, and to crown it all, a bear was killed during the evening, in the water near the ship. Personally, I felt greatly encouraged by these ceremonies, and went to bed feeling that at any moment "A fall! a fall!" might be heard.

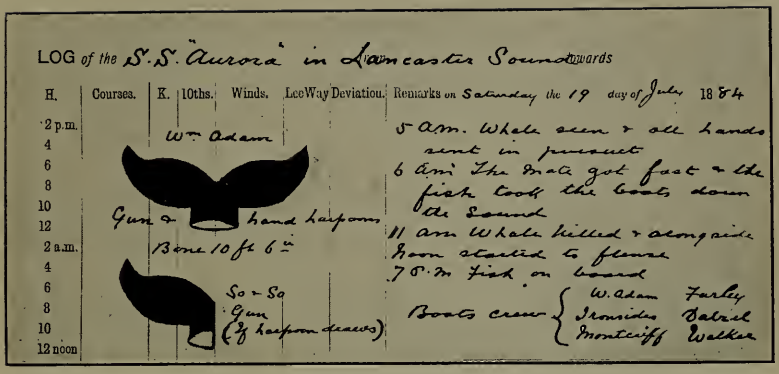
If some misfortune happens to a whaler—such as having his harpoon gun passed to him through the rigging, instead of around it, or if his boat should start away from the ship stern first and not be brought back, hooked on, hauled up and lowered again—then he would go after a whale certain that he would miss it, whereas, should he dream the night before that he had got fast to a fish, then he would approach it with the utmost confidence.

July 18th. Friday. I had an undisturbed night and awoke to find it blowing and the ship under sail. Going on deck, I found the topsails aback

and much loose ice about. After breakfast, all hands were away after a whale seen among the loose ice. This was a hopeless kind of rowing, so we scattered about, following different leads. We saw the fish blowing in several different places, but could not get near it, so came on board. During the afternoon, the wind went down and the loose ice drifted out again, so we hooked on to the solid floe about three miles from the south side and a boat was put on each side, as usual. Numbers of narwhals around during the afternoon, induced a boat to follow them, and a big female was secured with a calf. The undeveloped tusks of the latter were hollow like cigarette holders.

July 19th. Saturday. I had not been asleep long when I heard "All hands!" and, rushing up, went off in my usual boat, the lower quarter boat on the starboard side. I heard that a fish had been seen spouting down the Sound. In a few minutes, we all saw it off the south shore, a mile from the ship. We gave way with a will and soon had the boats in open order along the floe, where we thought it had passed under. Our patience was rewarded when it came up between the mate and Watson. Mr. Adam, being the nearer, swept down on its quarter and, as it made a back to sound, he gave it both gun and hand in the shoulder. This was a big fish and a fine chase began. I had seen the mate strike and I knew the irons would not draw. Straight down the Sound we went, the wounded animal taking out much line.

Sometimes a fish goes deep and does not travel very far, but this one was a traveller. We pulled for about twenty minutes or more and then halted, the whale coming up ahead of us and going down again at once. The mate's boat had signalled for more lines by putting a piggin on a boat-hook, and another boat had stood by and bent on. Before long, the wounded one came up and another iron was put in; it was well puffed after its run and stayed up long enough to get some lances stuck in. A lance, cutting any large vessel in the neck or thorax, would cause it to bleed to death very quickly, but none of these lances touched vital parts, for the whale went down in a very lively way with four or five sticking in it, and it must have stayed down fifteen minutes, travelling fast all the time. When it reappeared, we were on to it at once, and it soon began to blow blood and give other evidences of approaching dissolution. Its plunges were dangerous and the reports caused by striking the water with its tail, were very loud. We always backed well off during one of these demonstrations, but were on to it at once when they ceased. There was much more danger from the flukes than the tail, as we were touching its sides with the boats. After one or two terrific blasts of blood and water, and a great flurry, it turned up its toes, and after the usual formalities, the long tow to the ship began. Shanties were sung with vigor and we pulled with a will. As I had not had anything to eat since ten P. M., the day before, and as we had been


LOG of the S.S. "Aurora" in Lancaster Sound towards

H.	Courses.	K.	10ths.	Winds.	Lee Way	Deviation.	Remarks on Saturday the 19 day of July 1884
2 p.m.							5 a.m. Whale seen & all hands sent in pursuit
4							6 a.m. The mate got fast & the fish took the boats down the Sound
6							11 a.m. Whale killed & alongside
8							Noon started to flense
10							7 P.M. Fish on board
12							Boats crew { W. Adam Farley, Ironsides Batzel, Montcriff Walker
2 a.m.							
4							
6							
8							
10							
12 noon							

Page of a Whaler's Log

A Fast Fish

working hard all night, I was ready for breakfast when we reached the ship. The fast boats had come on board, taking their lines in with the winch. After breakfast all hands were called and it took many hours to flense this big fish, the bone of which was 10½ feet. I examined the flukes after the blubber had been removed from them; they were like huge hands with nicely proportioned fingers. I entered in the log the death of the fish, and a little picture of its tail. This is the custom. In the log there was a paper model, which was held on the page with the finger and traced around the edge with a pencil. Then it was shaded, according to the ability of the artist, and the name of the harpooner was written above. On each side was stated whether killed by gun or hand, or both, and below was written the length of the bone. Should the harpoon draw, and the whale be lost, half a tail was sketched.

During the flensing, one of our firemen, Bob Graham, appeared at the engine room door with six pieces of rope yarn tied together, and to the free end of each he had fastened a piece of blubber, just big enough to pass comfortably through the throat of a mollie (as fulmars are called), either way. Graham was an ingenious fellow and remarkable for his fertility of resource; he was always amusing himself by devising little surprises to make life pleasant for others. He threw this affair into the sea and the six pieces of fat were instantly swallowed by the same number of mollies. All went well until it became evident that

the birds were not of the same opinion as to the direction of their next move. This performance seemed to me cruel at first, but after watching it for a little while, I decided that the exercise was good for the fulmars and did not hurt them. Of course, there were little disappointments connected with it, but then creatures, higher in the social scale, have their disappointments also. It is just possible that the bird which played the game out and eventually swallowed all six pieces and the string, may have had regrets, but from what I have seen of this particular species, I don't think it suffered much.

When the flensing was over, every one was tired, and the men were ordered to turn in, excepting the lookout, all having been busy during the day. As whaling was a very irregular sort of life, it was the custom to sleep while one could, and as I had done a lot of rowing during the previous twenty-four hours, I sought my cabin. Our specksioneer, George Lyon, was an old man, but he was absolutely indefatigable, and when this order was given, he decided to go on the bran instead of to bed. Accordingly, he raised a crew of volunteers, but being short one man, he thought of me. There was one way of always bringing me on deck and that was to go to the companionway and shout down the word "bear." This George did and I at once appeared, rifle in hand. Seeing the boat being lowered, I tumbled in, and in a minute we were away. I then asked where the bear was and the specksioneer said that we might see one; so I

knew his trick. We went some distance south of the ship and, backing the boat up to the ice, laid the steering oar on it, which held us there, then we talked and smoked.

About midnight all was quiet, except for the heavy breathing of the narwhals and white whales in the sea, and of those who slept in the boat; it was easy enough to sleep, sitting at an oar. I was awake, the boat-steerer was standing on the ice, and the man in the ship's barrel was scanning the Sound for fish, when suddenly, without the slightest warning, there was a great commotion in the water, at the side of our boat, and up came a whale with a fearful blast. This first blast of a whale, which has been holding its breath for a long time, sounds very loud, when one is within ten feet of it. It reminds one of a train coming suddenly out of a tunnel. The boat-steerer instantly pushed the boat well off, getting in at the same time He then said "Give way," which we did. The whale was moving very slowly, and one sweep of the boat-steerer's oar brought us around to it, then I heard the orders, "Stand by your gun!" and "Avast pulling!" I would have given anything for one look; but the lives of all the crew depended upon each man doing as he was told, so I sat perfectly still and leaned well away from the line running up the middle of the boat. Presently there was a bang, and the line began running out, while every one called "A fall." I was now in a boat, fast to a fresh whale, which was an experience the average amateur rarely had. As the har-

pooner took a turn of the line around the bollard head in the bows, and paid the line out through his hands, the bow of the boat was dragged very low and the stern tilted very high, but the speed we travelled at was not so great as I had expected. The whale came up between the boat and the ship, and we were being towed down the Sound. All the boats were away from the ship in a minute. We called out the number of lines out, and they had no difficulty in finding about where the whale was, and being ready for it when it came up. A second iron was put in when it appeared and off it went again. The water being absolutely free from ice, the chase was an easy one, as a boat could generally go faster than a whale. All I had to do was to sit quiet and keep well away from the line. As there was no ice to endanger the boat, the line was put several times around the bollard head and kept very tight, so we were towed much faster than if it had been loose. After the whale was killed and all the lines cut free, we were called on board to have or lines hauled in, after which the ship unhooked and steamed off to pick up her boats. The sky was very much overcast when we brought the whale alongside, and the tired crew, after getting some food, had to flense at once, as a change of weather might have been serious.

The *Aurora* now looked as a successful whaler should—a big whale in the 'tween-decks and another alongside tons and tons of blubber lying about everywhere, and the passage between the

engine room and skylight, and the bulwarks, piled with bone.

Before the flensing was over, it had commenced to blow and it was quite rough by the time we had finished. Then we unhooked and ran down the Sound a little way, while the crew turned in for a watch. As our main yard was aback, it required very few men to handle the ship. All night we were dodging about.

July 21st. Monday. For some time, the clock had not been watched. Had it been, it would have conveyed little information, because, when it suited, it was put backward or forward. When a man going to bed saw by the clock that it was midnight, and when he arose and saw by the same clock that it was six, he probably felt refreshed. In the end, of course, it would tell on him if the full amount of rest registered had not been obtained; but for a time it worked very well. It certainly took a long time to make off our two whales, and it gave us a substantial feeling to be able to say, "Five fish on board." When the decks were cleared up, the crew were ordered below, excepting the lookout, but shortly after, it came on to blow hard and the sky was much overcast. Later, some rain fell, so we unhooked and lay off the ice edge with the main yard aback.

CHAPTER XVI

WHALING IN LANCASTER SOUND

"White, quiet sails from the grim icy coasts,
That bear the battles of the whaling hosts,
Whose homeward crews, with feet and flutes in tune,
And spirits roughly blithe, make music to the moon."

July 22nd. Tuesday. During the night the rain changed into snow and in the morning it was blowing a gale. In fact, it was a wild, winter's day. We were amongst loose ice, with our main yard aback and there was no open water to be seen anywhere. During the day the snow ceased but the wind kept up until late in the afternoon, when we found ourselves in a triangular pool of water, the sides of the triangle being about half a mile long and the base, three or four hundred yards. The ship was anchored to one side and she lay parallel with the base and twenty or thirty yards away from it. This hole appeared to have been formed by large floes. It was quite free from ice and afforded us an ideal harbor.

July 23rd. Wednesday. All hands turned out shortly after four in the morning as a whale was seen at the apex of this triangle. One boat had been left fast to the ship's stern. This went in pursuit and the others lowered away, the one I was in being ordered to remain fast to a line from

the ship's stern. Long before the boats reached the whale, it sounded and did not appear again, so they came on board, all but the one I was in. Our bows were towards the ship's stern and the boat's side was twenty yards from the ice edge. We had been there about an hour when, with a great commotion, a tremendous whale came up between the ship and the ice edge. Its head was alongside our boat before we realized what had happened; and by the time we had slipped the line the leviathan had passed us, as it was going fast. We could almost have touched him with the oars, but by the time we turned the boat and were under way, down went the fish to look for another breathing place elsewhere and we returned to our berths. Had the bow of the boat been the other way, we could have fastened the whale easily.

At eight bells, we came on board for breakfast. Just as I entered the cabin, I heard the rushing on deck and, going up, found two boats off after a whale. It had simply come up to breathe and, having breathed, it went down again and disappeared from our harbor. One boat remained at the apex of the triangle and the other returned; and, on the way, a fish came up a hundred yards in front of it. They pulled hard and took a long shot as it humped its back going down. They got fast and the whale went off under the ice. From the barrel, a small water hole could be seen half a mile away, and to this several ran, carrying a rocket gun which could be fired from the shoul-

der. Before they had gone very far, however, the harpoon drew and, as there was no use firing rockets into a free fish, they came on board again. It was now blowing pretty hard and very cold, but we still kept a boat at the apex of the triangle and one beside the ship. Now occurred a very exciting race. A whale came up half way along one side of the hole, and was travelling slowly towards the base. The boat at the apex followed, the one by the ship did not move, and every man on board was watching what would happen. Reaching the base, the whale halted to take a few long breaths before going down, the boat rapidly neared, the whale humped its back and the boat had to fire. From where we were, we saw the harpoon fly up into the air with the foregoer wriggling after it, then it fell, missing the whale as completely as if it had not been fired at it. I was sorry for that harpooner. He was a big man from Aberdeen, with a yellow beard, and he was a nervous wreck when he came on board. This fearfully bad luck was maddening, and we were all on edge; for, though the place was swarming with whales, we never got one. Had we got fast to half a dozen, we would have lost them all through lines being cut by the ice, or fouling.

By the evening, the wind had gone down and the ice was slacker, the whole east side of our pool moving away.

July 24th, Thursday, was a beautiful day after the storm and we had open water astern once more. We unhooked after breakfast and steamed

slowly towards the south side again, and while steaming, we sighted a whale down the Sound. The ship was anchored to the ice and the boats distributed in the usual way. This whale did not come up after being first seen until it was at the ice edge, when one of our boats got fast. It then went under the floe — a most unusual proceeding when it had lots of open water. We were along the ice edge, nearly a mile from the fast boat, and wondering what would happen next, when, in a very small hole, 150 yards from my boat, up came the head of the whale. The hole was not many times larger than the head. The under surface of the lower jaw was towards us. It had a very white appearance. The head turned around very slowly presenting a wonderful sight. Gyles, the harpooner, in whose boat I was, seized a rocket gun and, running to the hole, fired, and the head went down as slowly as it came up. Presently the fish appeared in the open water and was immediately harpooned again. Its experience under the ice, or Gyle's rocket, had affected it so that it did not remain down but soon came up again and submitted patiently to the lancing operation which ended its life. This removed the gloom caused by the awful luck of the previous day. We had now more than three tons of bone, and that alone would be a fair voyage. The flensing began just as soon as the crew had food and was not finished until bedtime.

July 25th. Friday. Every one was cheerful. Some of the hands were cleaning bone, two boats

were on the bran, and one after narwhals, as there were many of them about.

I painted the figurehead, as the *Aurora* was looking a little dissipated with her out-stretched arm unhooked. This was only in commission when in port; consequently, it looked younger than her seagoing arm, which was a fixture across her breast and which had stood the brunt of many gales.

July 26th. Saturday. All hands were "making off" the fish. They were at it early and had finished by noon, and then there was a general clean up for Sunday, but strict watch was kept. There were only white whales and some narwhals around. The tusks we took from those we killed and those we had bartered for, always lay on the after grating, which covered the well down which the auxiliary propeller went; there was never enough motion to roll them off.

July 27th. The usual Sunday gale was blowing and we were dodging about under canvas all day. I was out on a yard during a snow squall and found it very exciting. This was my first attempt at taking in sails when there was much wind. We spoke the *Narwhal;* she had seven whales and reported the *Arctic* as having eight and all the rest well fished. Towards evening we sailed to our favorite fishing ground on the south side.

July 28th. Monday. All hands were away after a whale at six A. M. We had a long pull, and lost her for a time amongst the loose ice. Rounding

Underwood.

Heave away Capstan

this, however, we reached her again and the mate got fast, McLean putting in a second. We passed both boats and were in at the kill. When we had backed off once for a flurry, I looked around and saw Watson lancing. I thought the flukes would have smashed his boat, he took such awful chances. This whale rolled about a great deal, and bristled with lances which she had torn from the men's hands by rolling. She was also dreadfully tangled up with lines which had caught on the lances. There is sometimes danger from being caught under these lines and cut in two. When a dead whale is lying on its back, the abdomen lies very low in the water, and, when freshly killed, sinks with a man when he walks along it. As we were a long way from the ship, she came after us and we soon had the whale alongside. The capstan was used for taking on board the big blanket pieces. At the order, "Heave away capstan," a shanty was struck up by the men marching around. They sang so loud that we could often hear their weird songs coming over the water from other ships similarly engaged. Our friends, the fulmar petrels, were always with us upon occasions of this kind, and all that were in the Sound, I think, spent the day with us.

The outer skin of the whale is about as thick as stiff paper, and black. It peels off readily, and the men cut book markers out of it. Under this comes a layer, nearly an inch thick, of rather gelatinous stuff, which the Eskimos eat raw, then the blubber between this and the superficial fascia,

by which the body heat is preserved. It took us practically all the rest of the day to flense.

July 29th. Tuesday. We had a visit from two natives; they were prosperous looking people with a good sled and dogs. I admired the protection from the sun which they wore. It was a piece of wood with a slit cut in it. This was very efficacious, but unbecoming. We learned from these people that many whales had been seen by them this year. They had some bear skins with them for trade, and some walrus ivory. This was much inferior to the narwhal ivory, which was very fine and was worth, at this time, I think, one pound ten per pound, that of the walrus being only worth half a crown. I had a long walk with a gun but did not see anything.

July 30th. Wednesday. All hands "making off." I tried to skin a fulmar, but could not do it, it was so fat. I wanted a skin badly, but this was too much for me. All the birds we killed were fat, a provision of nature against cold. The men said, however, that they could not wear oil soaked clothes in cold weather.

I was in the "crow's nest" a good while. It was most difficult to see anything at a distance owing to the mirage. During the afternoon I tried to shoot some narwhal near us. I shot at their heads with a rifle from the boat, and although they had sometimes been killed with the rifle, so little of the head showed when the beast was lying on the surface, that I fancy they must have been shot from the ship, which stood high.

July 31st. Immediately after breakfast, four boats were away after a whale. I remained on board and watched from the barrel. It was a long pull and the whale got away amongst loose ice without giving the boats a chance. We captured a female narwhal in the afternoon.

August 1st. Friday. Lovely day but very cold. In the morning I was sitting on the after grating, scraping a bear's skull, when a hundred yards or so astern of us arose a whale with the usual blast. The water was like a mirror and the fish lay there for several minutes and breathed heavily. No one spoke or moved. There in front of us was a fine whale, its jet black head and back showing up well and reflected on the absolutely glassy surface of the sea. When it slowly sank with its head towards us, we knew it would go under the ice, but we would not lower away until we were sure it was under. I was leaning over the after rail, peering into the water, when I saw the whale coming slowly under where I was standing. I first noticed a large, gray bow coming towards me; it was the under jaw, and as it passed beneath the vessel I could see distinctly the large round, dark spots on the huge lower lip. It passed a very short distance under our keel. There was no movement of either flukes or tail. I watched the great horizontal tail in the hope of seeing some movement. Only the man in the "crow's nest" and I alone saw the fish passing under the ship, and as soon as we were sure that it was safe, the boats went away as noiselessly as possible and we

waited for the result with bated breath. It came up almost beside the ship and Jimmy Watson put in both gun and hand harpoons, then came the joyful shout "A fall," and we started down the Sound. As the fish was well fastened, it was safe to snub the line around the bollard head of the boat; there was no fear of the irons drawing and it made a heavy drag on the whale. The line, in running out, passes through the hands of the harpooner before going around the bollard head. Of course, he wears several pairs of mittens, but these are generally torn to pieces. Our friend shortly came to the surface rather exhausted, as the line had been well snubbed, but Thor put another iron into him. This smarted and one could have heard his tail strike the water miles away. He lashed it with such force that no boat could go close; and before a rocket could be fired into him, he was off. This time the drag was very heavy, for he had two boats. It did seem absurd that this huge monster, more than sixty feet long and forty around the waist, could be conquered by having those little bits of harpoons stuck in with their little threads of lines attached, but whales of this species are clumsy and stupid and turn very slowly, and it is this inability to turn fast that proves their undoing. Upon appearing the next time, a rocket was instantly fired into a vital place and the final flurry came at once and made lancing unnecessary. The row back was a pleasure, and our joyful shanties could be heard for a long distance. We were alongside by midday, and after dinner, flensing

commenced. I amused myself again with the fulmars. Getting a boat, I laid my left elbow over the side so that I could look between it and the gunwale. Every time a fulmar came under, I darted my right hand over, catching him by the neck and taking him on board. When I had a great flock of them, I put them on the poop, around which there was a base board about four inches high, and above this the iron railing. The birds had eaten so much blubber that they could not get over the base board. One had to be careful of bites, as they had the curved, pointed bills peculiar to the albatross, shearwater and other birds of this tribe. It is curious that the great albatross and diminutive storm petrel, the wren of the sea, should belong to the same species. In a very short time, I saw the advisability of throwing my flock of pets overboard. We did not go below for supper until the fish was flensed.

August 2nd, Saturday, was cold and cloudy, but no wind. We were hooked on with two boats on the bran; all hands making off during the afternoon.

August 4th. Monday. Three of the four boats were after a whale among some loose ice to the north of us. One boat got fast and all immediately lowered away. When we reached the ice, navigation became difficult and the fish came up where we could not touch it. Several boats came out of the ice and tried to row around. Ours was one of these; then we found that the harpoon had drawn and the whale had vanished. We pursued some

distance down the Sound and had nothing for our trouble but exercise.

August 5th. Tuesday. Much loose ice in the Sound, caused by wind during the night. Narwhal were abundant, and two boats went after them with no result. Later the ship unhooked and steamed east looking for open water. I spent a long time in the "crow's nest," and, as there was no mirage, got a beautiful view of the south coast —very wintry at bed time.

August 6th. Wednesday. The rushing of feet overhead brought me to the deck on a gloomy cold morning, and before I had time to add anything to the clothes in which I slept, we were a mile from the ship. A whale had been seen some distance to the north and four boats pursuing it. We paused and put on some more clothes to keep out the keen Arctic air, and then we went off again, as the whale had come up. Long before the leading boat got near, it had disappeared, but we were not discouraged, so kept on, and this hard work continued until we were far from the ship and getting amongst pans of loose ice. The whale we were following was a fast traveller and we were ultimately obliged to give up the chase and return. The row back was long and wearisome, and when I reached the ship I had my long delayed breakfast and retired, but the moment I turned in to my berth, the rush above told of more whales in sight, so I went on deck. A fish had been seen blowing a long way down the Sound and six boats were away, but bed appealed to me more than an-

other long pull, so I returned to it and remained there until the following morning. Our boats did not get a shot but had a long chase and did not return until very late.

The day was cold and the density of the atmosphere uniform, so I was able to see all the other ships distinctly with the glass. Some swell had broken up the edge of our floe and some pieces had been driven up the Sound, so it looked more icy than any day since the time when all the whales came. During the afternoon we hooked on to a large floe. The *Polynia* and *Esquimaux* were near us, but to the south; the *Arctic* was some distance down the Sound. Swarms of white whales were about us in the open places.

August 7th. Thursday. The loose ice was gone. We had unhooked during the night and steamed west to the fast floe. I went up to the barrel and the Captain went down to get his pipe. While gazing at distant things, I heard a noise on deck and, looking over, saw all hands lowering away for two whales astern of us. I must have been looking in another direction when they appeared, because the first I knew of it, was the noise below. Our boats lay about half on each side and were playing the usual waiting game. The Captain came up to the barrel and I went down, but too late to enter a boat, as they had all gone, except the two upper quarter boats. This was a great disappointment to me, as I had assisted in killing every whale we had taken on board. After a while, one fish came up on the south or port side

and was fastened by the farthest south boat. The whale went under the ice, but came out nearer the ship and was fastened again. This proved the worst whale we had seen. It did not go down again but rolled about so much and slapped the water with its flukes to such an extent that the boats were rather afraid of it. This went on for a long time, when the Captain called out that he would kill it himself, so he came down and ordered the port upper quarter boat launched. All boats had their gear ready, whether we used them or not. A crew of irregulars was called, the Captain as harpooner, myself next, the sailmaker next, third engineer, cooper, etc. The Captain went up at once and, driving a lance into the whale's neck, began churning it up and down. The fish allowed itself to sink a few feet, and the bows of the boat glided over it as the Captain held on to the lance. Then coming to the surface again, it tumbled the boat over on its starboard side and instantly gave a great blast from its lungs. My oar came out of the water, so I let it go and, grasping the seat with my right hand and putting my left on the whale's back, I got the full charge of blood and water over my side and shoulder, as I was almost over the blow-hole, and such was the force, that my thick pilot coat was soaked with blood, and also the thick coat underneath. I saw the sailmaker, who was in front of me, turn around; his face was green, in spite of the tan. He was almost in the water. The boat, fortunately, slid off the slippery neck and a serious acci-

dent was averted. The great danger would have been from being caught between the whale and the many lines it had wound around itself. After this, a couple of rockets were put in and the most troublesome fish of the season gave up its ghost. As all this happened beside the ship, we were saved the usual tedious tow, and in an hour flensing was commenced. It was six when we had all on board. The second whale did not reappear—probably finding a breathing place in the floe. The sky was overcast at bedtime and there was a bitterly cold wind. Having the engines aft made a great difference to the temperature of the cabin, as the bulkhead between the pantry and engine room was always hot.

August 8th. Friday. We were off Cape Hay when I came on deck and sailing east under topsails. This cape was a wonderful place for looms. They bred there in thousands; but we did not land or go very close, so I had no chance of seeing much.

Quite a number of the ships had already left the Sound, among others the *Arctic*. Her captain, having secured thirteen black whales, had decided to try his luck in Repulse Bay, Fox Channel, where he had had former success. Owing to the amount of ice in the Sound and on the west coast, he had come to this decision. Consequently he had sailed to Hudson's Straits, passing from Frobisher Bay through Gabriel Straits and encountering the dreadful current for which the neighborhood is noted. Ice was met with about Salisbury Island, and beyond this he was unable to take his

ship, so he returned to Cumberland Gulf and from there home without adding to his cargo.

Lancaster Sound was beginning to look and feel like winter, the weather being very frosty. The mountains on the south side, which are about two thousand feet high, were very white, as a number of snow storms had passed over them. We were anticipating with pleasure a visit to Pond's Bay and the points usually called at on the west coast. One can generally take a ship by Navy Board Inlet through Eclipse Sound to Ponds Bay, but this year the ice precluded such a trip.

We kept under sail, to save our coal, and ended off Wollaston Islands at the entrance of Navy Board Inlet, without having seen any whales. Here we hooked on to a large floe.

August 9th. Saturday. After breakfast all hands were called to make off. It was a very cheerful performance, our men being in good spirits. The day was bitterly cold, but work kept them warm. Ice formed where the sun did not strike the water as there was hardly any wind to disturb it.

By dinner time the whale was made off and during the afternoon the watch employed cleaning up. We remained hooked on all night.

Sunday was a bitterly cold day and blowing a little, so we went further down the sound under topsails. About ten A. M. we sighted a whale and sent four boats in pursuit. I was in the second mate's. After a long chase the mate got fast. There was much ice about, so it was dangerous

work for the fast boat, as it was impossible to avoid the pieces when being towed, and should the boat strike a floe it would be smashed at once and all hands would have to jump.

When the fish came up first there was no boat near, but on coming up a second time Watson got in an iron and we had a very lively run down the Sound. With two harpoons in, there was a considerable drag on, and in a short time she reappeared and a boat was soon lancing.

Our boat had been delayed by pieces of ice, so that it was late when we arrived on the scene. However this was a very vital whale and difficult to kill. I saw our specksioneer Lyon's boat almost smashed by one of the flukes during a flurry.

The perfectly fearless old man was so absorbed in his lancing operations that he did not notice the fluke coming, and but for the quick action of his boat-steerer, an accident would have occurred.

The ship had followed us, so we had no towing when the battle was over, as she picked the boats up, taking the whale with her to a floe where she anchored. Two more boats had been lowered away when they heard " A fall " called. One had gone to help the mate with more line, and the other had taken part in the chase.

After having something to eat, flensing was the order of the day, our cheerful crew singing with great spirit to the orders " Heave away capstan " and " Heave away windlass." This, our tenth whale, was a heavy one and it was late when we got it all on board.

The ship remained at the floe all night, drifting with it down the Sound.

Monday, the 11th, was a wintry day, bitterly cold and an overcast sky. During the afternoon we had some snow squalls. We dodged about under topsails, but did not see even a narwhal. It was evident that our chance of catching white whales this year in Prince Regent Inlet was small. We anchored to the ice off Cape Liverpool at night.

Tuesday, August 12th, all hands were engaged making off in the morning and doing a general clean up during the afternoon.

West Side Woman's Boat

A Beautiful Berg

CHAPTER XVII

LANCASTER SOUND TO DUNDEE

"To claim the Arctic came the sun,
With banners of the burning zone
Unrolled upon their airy spars.
They froze beneath the light of stars,
And there they float, those streamers old,
Those Northern Lights, forever cold."

The neighborhood of Cape Byam Martin was considered good whaling ground, so we spent the next few days cruising off it and the coast further down, but without seeing anything of interest. Even seals were scarce. It was remarkable how few we saw north of the Arctic circle.

By going aloft, one could always see, in some direction on the ice, a black dot, which represented a seal, but after the tens of thousands seen on the coasts of Newfoundland and Labrador, they were scarce indeed; in fact, I never shot one during the whole northern trip.

We found Ponds Bay that paradise of the old whalers so full of ice that we were unable to visit the natives, which was a great disappointment to us all. It was a bad year for seeing much of the land as there was so much ice coming down.

From the ship, the line of the shore looked

straight, except off the bay, but there were great fiords running into the land for miles. One of them, known as "Hell's Kitchen," had been a noted place for whalers. Two branches of it, named respectively, "Morris" and "Cooney," extended far into the country, one of them having been navigated by Captain Guy for about forty miles.

Ponds Bay was a celebrated place for salmon fishing, the whalers often getting wonderful catches there, thereby improving their menu greatly. At this time, the weather was very wintry, frost and snow reminding us of where we were, and by the night of Sunday, the 17th, we were only off Cape Bowen.

Monday was a beautiful day and we were fast to the shore floe, a long way from the land. The Captain decided to improve the shining hour by having the ship painted, so the boats were put upon the ice and the men employed, cleaning and painting. The *Aurora* was comparatively new, so it was very easy cleaning her, as her woodwork was good and she had been well kept up. Even washing her down with the alkaline solution used gave her a nice appearance. By evening, a great deal had been accomplished and inside she looked very neat.

The little auks were numerous about here. One of our firemen killed three with a broom handle and I shot a fine bag. There was a good flight of ducks along the floe edge and I had several shots at them. As the birds were young, they were

Little Auk

A Baffin Land Harbour

worth having, being free from the fishy flavor peculiar to their parents.

August 19th. We finished painting the boats, but left them on the ice, excepting two from which the lines had not been removed.

Our fishing, so far, had nearly all been floe edge. We had not entered the middle pack very far, where the whales were sometimes numerous at this season. The enormous amount of ice made the Captain think twice about pushing his ship, with her valuable cargo, into it, and so we kept quietly down the coast, occasionally going out a little where the ice was loose, but remembering Sir Leopold McClintock's winter in the middle pack with the *Fox*.

The southwest fishing, to which we were now going, was generally prosecuted in the autumn. The ships lay at anchor in some harbor, and every morning the boats rowed out and watched for whales. It was cold, dreary work and very unpopular with the men; but whales killed late in the season were often large and well worth looking for.

August 20th. Wednesday. The boats were hoisted up this day and, with the Captain, I went on the ice to look at the ship. It was cold and I had on half-boots, a thick double-breasted monkey jacket, with leather gauntlets and a leather sealing cap. We walked to where the painting had been done and there admired the ship. She looked well, sitting rather down by the stern. All the crew, practically, had been standing on this ice

for the last two days and nothing had happened. I went rather close to the edge and the piece I was standing on gave way and I went down at once, but on coming up, with one or two strokes, reached the ice edge. It took some seconds for my clothes to soak as I had so much on, and by that time, one of the men, Jock Fairly, came with a boat hook, by the help of which I was pulled out. My clothes were so completely water-logged that, without assistance, getting out would have been impossible. Again the gentle warmth of the top of the boiler proved a comfort.

August 21st. Thursday. Hooked on, with a stiff breeze blowing and the sky overcast. Ducks were flying in great numbers past a point half a mile away, so, taking the dingey, I went off to it. There was no shelter and, although every bird must have seen me, the silly things would not leave the ice edge, but would just swing out far enough to make my shots effective. This shooting both barrels into the "brown," as the ducks passed, was not so much fun as getting them in pairs, but one soon picks up a good bag, and as I was shooting for the pot, a bag was what I wanted. When I came on board, the birds were tied in bundles and hung up on the davit guys above the quarter boats.

August 22nd. During the afternoon, a bear was seen, so we went off in a boat to capture it. As there was no solid ice, the beast had to get out of and into the water so many times that he could not escape, and he was killed from the boat by

the mate. I landed and tried to stalk him, but he left my pan and I could not follow him.

Two ships were in sight southeast of us. One of them was the *Cornwallis*, which we had not seen for some time. I was anxious to get near her as Armitage was on board, but she was a long way off. We always knew the other, the *Esquimaux*, by her mizzentop, as she had once been a full-rigged ship, although now a barque.

On Saturday, the wind blew a gale, which kept us dodging under the canvas; but by Sunday the weather had improved.

During the morning we sailed up to the shore floe, as we saw some natives there, and picked them up. They had tusks and dog skins for trade. We took them, with their dogs and sledges, on board. One of them was a good-looking, pleasant native, called Enu. He added greatly to my Eskimo vocabulary during the next few days, and he told me that deer were plentiful in certain places and that salmon abounded. We steamed south all day, after picking up the natives, the weather being cold but fine.

August 25th. Monday. Steaming down the coast and the weather quite fine. During the afternoon, a black spot inshore indicated the mouth of a river. The shore floe at this point was a mile wide, but the ice was smooth. A boat and the dingey with a net and ten men were sent to try to catch some salmon. A number of men were sent to haul the boats across the floe to the open water of the river mouth, and the natives came

also. Mr. Adam took the boat and I took the dingey. We had a boat's sail, plenty of coal, two ship's kettles, coffee, sugar, salt, biscuits and tins of mutton. Arriving at the open water, our helpers returned to the ship, and the natives, after turning their sleds upside down, so that the dogs could not run away with them, came with us in the boats. We rowed into a river, which was about thirty or forty yards wide at the mouth, shallow and placid. We went up a short distance and camped on the right bank. Above our camp, the river was a nice-looking little salmon stream; but below, it was more pretentious looking on account of its width. The net was drawn, with no result. It was tried in another place without getting a fin. Then, as it was growing late, we returned to camp. Tying two oars together, with their blades crossed, we laid the end of the long steering oar between these and this gave us an excellent frame for our tent, completed by throwing the large square boat's sail over it and tucking two of the corners underneath. Then a fine coal fire was started, a kettle of coffee made, and an excellent hash prepared, by mixing tinned mutton, sea biscuits, snow, pepper and salt. We enjoyed this thoroughly and I sat by the camp fire afterwards and listened to these men tell tales of happenings in former years. Thus, on the unhospitable shores of Baffin Bay, I had my first experience of camp life. After awhile I noticed that in spite of my clothing, my back was cold, so I turned it to the fire. Then my face was nearly frozen, so

I turned back. In the excitement of starting, I had thrown a rug into the boat and not thought of blankets. Now I began to wish I had brought some, for I spent a miserable night, waking up very often with the cold.

August 26th. At last the tedious night came to an end, and breakfast thawed us out and made things look more cheerful. The day was fine, so the *Aurora* was safe, and preparations were made for further fishing. Had the morning looked threatening, the ship would probably have signalled us to come on board. I am a keen fisherman, but the net did not appeal to me very much; so I decided to see what the country looked like and, taking Enu with me, went up the river. The bitterly cold night had caused some ice, so the men waited for a higher sun to dissipate this before we left camp. I found the country flat, as a whole, with low hills in the background. The native gave me to understand that beyond these hills was the caribou country, but one dared not risk going far from the ship, and so my chance of bagging a barren land head was small. Little gulches led away from the river, on the exposed sides of which there was no snow, but boggy ground and bad walking; while on the shady sides the ground was frozen and covered with patches of snow. I saw some places on the river which made me long to try the fly, and I am sure good sport could have been obtained. After a very tiresome walk of some hours, during which I did not see a bird or beast, I returned to camp. On coming close, I

saw a man walking from the river with a salmon in each hand, the first two caught. They had tried a number of places and had caught only these, so they sent them to camp for dinner. One was put in a big ship's kettle to boil, and the other split and cut into pieces which were hung around the fire on stakes made from driftwood. Each salmon weighed about ten pounds, the flesh being very red, and while they did not compare with those from home rivers, we considered them excellent, as they were the first fresh fish we had had on the voyage. Leaving camp, I went down to the boat and found they had just taken a splendid haul; the net was shot several times and a grand total of 108 fish counted out. Dinner was ready when we reached the fire and some more fish were staked out to cook.

This delicate repast over, our things were carried down to the boats and we made our way back as we had come. Seeing us from the ship, help had been sent to bring the boats across the ice.

Many of the whalers fish for salmon every year and sometimes catch great numbers. The best place is, as stated before, a river flowing into Ponds Bay. Here several thousands are often taken.

The Eskimo dogs had eaten their harness and gone away, excepting two lame fellows, and the natives made these pull them to the ship.

August 27th. Wednesday. Enu, with his menage, left for home, and after breakfast we un-

Enu in the Center

A Baffin Land Belle

hooked, and stood along the floe edge. From the "crow's nest" I saw with the glass a number of Eskimo sledges travelling north. They made no attempt to come near us, but kept close to the shore. At noon we were going among some loose ice, so hooked on. I had a very pleasant afternoon at the ducks and secured a good bag. All the birds killed were young eider. In fact, on the voyage, I only killed three varieties of duck, eider, king eider and long tail.

August 28th. Thursday. Two sledges with natives came off. There was a very hungry woman with them. I saw her picking at everything soft on board. She found the side of a box in which plug tobacco had been packed, and picked it up; there were some leaves of tobacco adhering to it. I saw her picking pieces of them and eating them. Dividing the 'tween-decks from the lower forecastle, there was a partition with a door. Just outside of this door stood a barrel into which the cook threw refuse from the gallery, which was just within the forecastle. I saw this polar American beauty put her arm into the barrel and bring forth a duck's skin, which had a tremendous coating of fat. She seized the skin with both hands and pulled the fat off with her teeth, devouring it greedily. When she came to the neck, she chewed it, bones and all. There were some most interesting children on board and they thoroughly enjoyed the coffee and biscuit with which they were supplied by the Captain's orders. We got some dog skins and small articles from these people,

but they had already been visited by some of the ships and their bear skins and horns taken.

August 29th. On Friday the natives left us early. We unhooked and sailed east, with a breeze from the south. We saw a bear and cub on the ice, so lowered away and went after them. Both took to the water, and we had to go around a large island of ice before we could reach them. I landed on this, and running across, tried a shot at them in the water, but they had gone too far and were behind hummocks of ice, so that I could not see them. The boat then overtook them and the mate shot both. As nothing more was seen among the loose ice we steamed to the floe edge and hooked on. I bagged a few ducks in the evening.

August 30th. Saturday. We steamed down the coast and hooked on off Cape Raper. Two natives came on board, and we bought a live fox from one of them. It was young and blue, and spent the rest of the voyage walking about the funnel casing, where its home was in a lime-juice box. The natives left during the afternoon and we remained at the floe edge all night.

It was a beautiful calm Sunday and the last day of August on which we arrived at Cape Kater. The *Cornwallis* very soon afterwards came in and I went on board at once.

They had had a most unsuccessful voyage as the ship had been spoiled for sailing by having an engine put in which was of no use. They had killed a whale and picked up a dead one, having one ton of bone from the two.

Underwood.

West Side Mother and Child

Poor old Captain Nichol was very much depressed. Every one said he was a fine sailor; that his blood was tar and his flesh rope yarns. They told us that the other ships had done well, the *Nova Zembla* having eight, the *Polynia* six and the *Esquimaux* ten whales when last seen.

Armitage came on shore with me and we visited some native habitations. They were tents made of skin, and the sun beating on them made them warm inside; but as there was not a particle of ventilation, the odor was the worst possible. We saw in them the stone lamps in which the seal oil was burned, moss being used as a wick; sometimes old tins served the purpose instead of stone.

This country is generally called Baffin Land. There is, however, no reason to believe that it is not divided up by channels into many islands. No doubt passages exist connecting Davis Straits with Fox Channel.

Much of the coast line is uncharted, especially north of Fox Land. Fiords running south from Eclipse Sound have been visited by whalers, but not explored; possibly they could be traced to Fury and Hecla Straits.

Whaling stations have several times been established on the west coast, at Exeter Sound and Cumberland Gulf—the first party wintering at the latter place in 1852, to the detriment of the natives.

These improvident people with modern rifles would kill all the game they could shoot, use what they required at the time and waste the rest,

whereas in old times they could just secure enough for their wants.

Again, children were brought up formerly in a hardy way, and taught how to wrest a living from the inhospitable country. Now by loafing around a settlement they acquire some of the pernicious habits of civilized men, and learn to depend upon the European and his ship, forgetting that these might be withdrawn at any time.

Monday was spent wandering about, but without seeing anything of interest. The *Cornwallis* was still hooked on when we left Cape Kater, on Tuesday. We kept away from the coast to look for a berg from which we might water. The weather was clear and frosty, and at night the aurora borealis was very beautiful.

September 3rd. Wednesday. We found a floe fast to the base of a very large berg, and on this there was a lake of fresh water frozen over. The ship being made fast, a hole was drilled in the ice and our water tanks filled.

On the berg there was a white fox, but no shooting at it was allowed lest the concussion should bring down masses of ice. By evening we moved away and made fast to a floe far from our dangerous neighbor. The cold was intense and bay ice formed around the ship.

I heard the thunder of splitting bergs several times during the night; they sounded like avalanches among the Alps in the springtime. At this season, especially on very cold nights, bergs often split and turn over owing to water freezing

West Side Native Residence

Native House on West Side

in crevices formed by the warm summer sun, and for this reason they are avoided as much as possible. We now spent five days dodging about under canvas with fires banked. Part of the time we were off Cape Hooper and part off Home Bay, but we did not see a single whale.

The weather was for the most part fine, but bitterly cold. If a mist arose at night the ship presented a curious spectacle in the morning, her rigging being coated with ice.

Our handy tradesmen during this period made some pretty things. The carpenter presented the Captain with a neat model of a ship, while the cooper turned out a tobacco box which was a work of art.

September 8th. Monday. We bore up for home. What cheerful news it was! Passage sails were bent, boats taken in and placed on skids, bunkers were coaled and all was life and bustle. Every one was happy. The voyage had been a success, and we had not had a serious accident.

The "crow's nest" was sent down, nautical time adopted and the watch set. To crown all, a fresh breeze sprang up, and with everything set and steaming full speed we started down the Straits.

By bedtime we were in a heavy fog, so the canvas was taken off and the engines slowed down. During the night the phosphorescence was very beautiful. Pieces of ice thrown away by the propeller looked like balls of fire, while the water immediately around the stern seemed all aflame.

For the next two days we had fog, so made little progress at night. During the day the men were employed washing lines and stowing them away. Guns and harpoons were cleaned and greased and the ship was thoroughly washed.

On the 11th, we had a strong gale with a dark and cloudy sky. It was strange to be at sea and feel the motion of the ship after weeks of smooth water amidst the ice. After this the sea was smooth, and we had fog all the time until, off Cape Farewell on the 15th, the day being fine, the ship was hove to and painted outside. A dense fog came down that night, and we did not make another observation until off the Scottish coast.

On Saturday, September 20th, the fog was very dense and we steamed slowly until noon, when it lifted for a short time and showed us the island of St. Kilda. I was sorry we could not land here as it was a wonderful breeding place for the fulmar petrels; but home was in sight, and Captain Fairweather did not want to linger on a rock-bound coast, so we steered north and on Sunday morning, the 21st, we were off the Butt of Lewis.

It was thick at times during the morning, but cleared in the afternoon and gave us a view of the Orkneys. The Captain decided to go north of Orkney, as he did not like the Pentland Firth with so much fog about. At night the weather was perfectly clear.

September 22nd. Monday. On deck in the morning every one was looking pleasant, and the ship neat. We were crossing the Moray Firth

Baffin Land Scene

and coming close to the Aberdeen coast. A fishing boat from Fraserborough was hailed and an assortment of fish purchased for breakfast. These were paid for with tobacco, and the pay was liberal. The first question asked by us was, "Is England at war?" This being answered in the negative, greatly pleased those of the crew who were naval reserve men. Eight bells struck and my last breakfast on board the *Aurora* was served. After breakfast we passed Peterhead, formerly a great port for whalers, and then we steamed south close to the coast. The yellow fields of grain and stubble, the cottages and the trees, looked to our snow-dazzled eyes like Fairy Land. We passed Aberdeen and Stonehaven. We were close enough to see Dunottar's grim ruin, then Montrose, and in a short time our pilot was on board with all the news, and we were at home.

Of the Davis Straits ships in 1884 one was lost, the *Narwhal;* but now, with the exception of the *Active* and *Aurora,* the weed-grown ribs of the entire fleet rest beneath the waters of the cold northern seas and the records of their crews' escapes and hardships would fill volumes.

APPENDIX

Notice of arrival of whalers in *Dundee Advertiser* of September 23rd:

DUNDEE ADVERTISER, SEPTEMBER 23RD, 1884.

The Esquimaux — The Loss of Two Men

The *Esquimaux*, Capt. Milne, arrived in the Tay last night from Davis Straits, and will be docked with this morning's tide. The *Esquimaux* was unsuccessful at the Newfoundland seal fishing, only 1,900 seals having been secured; but she has brought a fair cargo from Davis Straits, consisting of 11 whales, which will yield 140 tons of oil and 6 tons of whalebone. Two fatalities have, unfortunately, occurred during the voyage. Early in the season a young man named Allan Smith, a native of Dundee, was dragged overboard by the line catching him after a bottle-nosed whale had been struck, and he was never seen again. It is a painful circumstance that Smith's father was lost from the same ship several years ago. Another of the crew was lost during the passage home. He accidentally fell overboard, and a boat was sent in search of him. After some time he

was picked up in semi-lifeless state, and all attempts to restore animation failed.

DUNDEE ADVERTISER, SEPTEMBER 23RD, 1884.

Davis Straits Whale Fishing — Arrival of Aurora.

The steamer *Aurora*, belonging to Messrs. Alex. Stephen & Sons, arrived at Dundee yesterday afternoon from the Davis Straits whale fishing. The *Aurora*, commanded by Capt. Jas. Fairweather, has had a very successful voyage. At Newfoundland 28,150 seals were secured during the two trips, the *Aurora* being the only one of the Dundee fleet which was fortunate in securing a good catch. On the 8th May she left St. John's for Davis Straits, and on reaching Disco fell in with the *Thetis* and *Bear*, on their way north in search of the Greely Expedition. The three ships thereafter kept in company until they reached the north water, when Capt. Fairweather steamed across to Lancaster Sound. An impenetrable barrier of ice blocked the Sound, a circumstance which told in favor of the fishing, as a large number of whales were secured at the edge of the ice. The crew were successful in capturing ten, and also three bottle-noses, which will yield 105 tons of oil and about 5 tons of whalebone. As the season advanced the fishing was prosecuted along the west coast of Davis Straits, but without suc-

cess, owing to the immense quantities of ice, which seemed never to have been driven out of the Straits this year. The frost came on unusually early and very severe, 12 to 14 degrees being registered in August. Capt. Fairweather bore up for home on the 8th Sept. and experienced a good deal of foggy weather in crossing the Atlantic. He confirms the news previously received of the catches of the fleet, and mentions that the *Polynia* is the only vessel which has added to her cargo, which now consists of 6 whales, equal to 60 tons of oil. The *Triune* sailed for home on the 6th Sept. Capt. Fairweather has brought home a fine specimen of the Sabine gull, a bird rarely to be met with in Davis Straits. It ought to be mentioned that the crew of the *Aurora*, after receiving the news of the *Chieftain* disaster from the pilot at the mouth of the river, subscribed the sum of £20 18*s*. to the fund.

Whalers sailing from Dundee in 1884:

Ship	Captain	Tons Reg.	Seals	Whales	Bottle-nose	Tons Seal Oil	Tons Whale Oil
Active	Brown	267	4,258		11	61	
Arctic	Guy	522	101	13	17	1	112
Aurora	Fairweather	386	28,153	10	3	283	97
Cornwallis	Nichol	394		2			21
Esquimaux	Milne	466	1,830	11	24	25	115
Intrepid	Davidson	326	940		8	29	
Jan Mayen	Deuchars	319	3,750	8		57	80
Maud	Watson	276	191		56	5	
Narwhal	Phillips	362	2,759	10		40	90
Nova Zembla	Kilgour	255	160	8	7		88
Polynia	Walker	359	991	6		13	58
Polar Star	Robertson	216	3,508		10	93	
Resolute	Jackman	424	4,722		3	102	
Star	Salmon	229	46		45		
Triune	Souter	382		11			92
Chieftain	Gellatley	169			3		

Whalers sailing from Peterhead in 1884:

Ship	Captain	Tons Reg.	Seals	Whales	Bottle-nose
Alert	Allan	130			24
Catherine	Abernathy	190			22
Eclipse	Gray	295	7,200	7	
Ereck	Gray	412	5,600	3	14
Earl of Mar	Mackie		2,240		12
Germanic	Walker				21
Hope	Gray	307	7,300	1	
Perseverance	McLennan	163			26
Windward	Murray	245	440		14

A list of Greenland and Davis Straits ships sailing from Holland, from Dr. Lang's book:

Date	Ships	Whales	Date	Ships	Whales
1661	133	452	1699	151	775
1662	149	862	1700	173	913
1663	202	932	1701	208	2,011
1664	193	782	1702	224	687
1665 }	War with		1703	207	644
1666 }	England		1704	130	652
1667 }			1705	157	1,657
1668	155	573	1706	151	966
1669	138	1,013	1707	131	126
1670	148	792	1708	122	533
1671	158	1,088	1709	126	192
1672 }	War with		1710	137	62
1673 }	England		1711	117	631
1674 }			1712	108	373
1675	147	900	1713	93	237
1676	145	812	1714	108	1,291
1677	145	785	1715	134	698
1678	120	1,118	1716	153	535
1679	126	792	1717	179	392
1680	151	1,373	1718	139	280
1681	175	876	1719	211	346
1682	195	1,444	1720	228	455
1683	242	1,338	1721	200	733
1684	233	1,153	1722	254	1,101
1685	209	1,283	1723	233	304
1686	189	764	1724	232	358
1687	194	621	1725	226	530
1688	214	340	1726	218	244
1689	160	241	1727	202	402
1690	117	785	1728	182	363
1691	War		1729	184	229
1692	32	56	1730	168	248
1693	90	170	1731	164	298
1694	63	161	1732	176	314
1695	97	187	1733	184	360
1696	122	428	1734	186	327
1697	131	1,279	1735	185	496
1698	139	1,483	1736	191	857

Date	Ships	Whales	Date	Ships	Whales
1737	196	504	1763		
1738	195	472	1764	161	224
1739	192	728	1765	165	477
1740	187	665	1766	167	189
1741	178	312	1767	165	179
1742	173	558	1768	160	600
1743	185	937	1769	152	1,127
1744	183	1,494	1770	150	523
1745	184	568	1771	150	143
1746	180	1,036	1772	131	768
1747	164	776	1773	134	444
1748	94	278	1774	130	450
1749	157	619	1775	124	105
1750	158	590	1776	123	509
1751	162	330	1777	116	427
1752	159	546	1778	111	306
1753	166	639	1779	105	108
1754	171	672	1780	82	476
1755	181	720	1781 }	War	
1756	186	508	1782 }		
1757	180	423	1783	55	330
1758	159	371	1784	62	198
1759	155	464	1785	65	300
1760	154	454	1786	67	476
1761	161	357	1787	67	239
1762	165	189	1788	69	190

Ships at Greenland and Davis Straits, with number of whales killed:

	1790		1814	
	Ships	Whales	Ships	Whales
London	34	93	20	367
Hull	23	58	58	697
Liverpool	15	59	2	43
Whitby	12	30	8	172
Newcastle	7	31	5	49
Lynn	4	8	1	25
Sunderland	5	7		
Whitehaven	2	2		
Grimsby			1	7
Berwick			2	16
Leith	5	12	10	73
Aberdeen	4	7	13	178
Dundee	4	3	8	61
Dunbar	3	9		
Montrose	3	4	3	47
Glasgow	2	3		
Kirkcaldy			4	7
Peterhead			7	164
Banff			2	30
Kirkwall			1	10
Greenock			1	35
Boness	2	5		

The above list shows how the trade changed in a few years from London to Hull, and it also shows how Scotland increased her fleet, while England reduced hers.

In an old work—"McPherson's Annals of Commerce"—is found the following list of ships sent to the whaling:

1771	England	50	Scotland	9
1773	"	55	"	10
1774	"	65	"	9
1775	"	96	"	9
1776	"	91	"	7
1777	"	77	"	7
1778	"	71	"	5
1779	"	52	"	3
1780	"	50	"	4
1781	"	34	"	5
1782	"	38	"	6
1783	"	47	"	4
1784	"	89	"	7
1785	"	136	"	13
1786	"	162	"	23
1787	"	219	"	31
1788	"	216	"	31
1789	"	133	"	28

1815	147	Vessels, —	Captured	891	Whales
1816	146	"	"	1,330	"
1818	157	"	"	1,208	"
1820	159	"	"	1,595	"
1821	158	"	"	1,438	"
1823	117	"	"	2,018	"
1824	111	"	"	761	"
1827	88	"	"	1,162	"
1831	88	"	"	454	"
1833	77	"	"	1,695	"
1836	61	"	"	70	"
1845	39	"	"	418	"
1850	32	"	"	87	"
1855	50	"	"	54	"
1860	51	"	"	99	"
1865	26	"	"	66	"
1870	22	"	"	86	"
1875	20	"	"	98	"
1880	19	"	"	12	"

The whaling was now confined to Dundee and Peterhead, and remained so until 1900, when

Peterhead sent her last whaler to sea, and since then the industry has been carried on by Dundee alone.

In 1733 a bounty of twenty shillings a ton on ships over two hundred tons was given by the English Government, and in 1749 this was doubled to induce competition with the Dutch.

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